# *Eccleſiaſtical Characteriſtics:*

K. 2

OR, THE

Scotland, Church of

# ARCANA of CHURCH POLICY.

BEING AN

# HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TO OPEN UP THE

# MYSTERY of MODERATION.

WHEREIN IS SHEWN

A plain and eaſy way of attaining to the CHARACTER of a MODERATE MAN, as at preſent in repute in the CHURCH of SCOTLAND.

THE FOURTH EDITION,

CORRECTED and ENLARGED.

*GLASGOW:*

Printed in the YEAR, M DCC LV.

# ADVERTISEMENT.

THE *First* Edition of the CHARACTERISTICS was publiſhed in the beginning of October 1753; the *Second*, the middle of December following; the *Third*, the end of May 1754; and this *Fourth*, the Firſt of February 1755.

TO THE

# DEPARTED GHOST,

OR

# SURVIVING SPIRIT,

Of the late Reverend

Mr. ———, Miniſter in ———

WORTHY SIR,

DURING a great part of the time I ſpent, in compoſing the following treatiſe, I was fully reſolved to have ſent it abroad by itſelf, and not to have dedicated it to any perſon in the world: and indeed, in a confined ſenſe of the word WORLD, you ſee I have ſtill kept my reſolution. The reaſon of this my intended purpoſe was, that I find the right honourable the earl of Shaftsbury, in an advertiſement or ticket, prefixed to his works, hath expreſſed a contempt, and diſdain of all dedications, prefaces, or other diſcourſes, by way of forerunners to a book. This he ſeems to think a mean and cowardly way in an author, of creeping into the world, and begging the reception which he dares not claim.

Being ſatisfied, therefore, of the juſtneſs of this obſervation, and being alſo ſomewhat confident (as his lordſhip ſeems to have been) of the intrinſic worth of my performance, I intended to have come forth in this maſterly manner.

But, upon more mature deliberation, I diſcovered that the only objections againſt dedications were, the ſelf-diffidence juſt now mentioned, and the ſuſpicion of flattery for ſelfiſh ends, which is ſo contrary to diſintereſted benevolence; ſo that if I could frame a dedication, which ſhould be quite beyond the imputation of any of theſe two purpoſes, I ſhould then wholly eſcape his lordſhip's cenſure. This aim, I think, I have fallen nothing ſhort of, when I have dedicated this book to you, moſt illuſtrious SHADE! as my moſt malignant enemies cannot but grant, that I could have no expectation of your encouraging me, either by buying my book, recommending it to others, or giving it away to the poor; nay, or even ſo much as voting for my tranſportation to a better benefice in Aſſembly or Commiſſion.

It ſtartled me a little, that this conduct might perhaps, by evil diſpoſed perſons, be repreſented as an approach to popery, and reſembling their worſhipping of ſaints; but, I hope, this can ſcarcely be imputed to me, in the preſent caſe, ſince you never were eſteemed a ſaint while you lived, nor ever thirſted after that title.

Another more material objection occurred to me, that a dedication to a dead man, is either almoſt, or altogether unprecedented. But I am not much concerned, though this method of proceeding ſhould be thought bold and new, becauſe this is the character which the incomparable Mr. —— gives of his own Eſſays upon the principles of morality and natural religion. Beſides, I am not altogether deſtitute of authority; for the memorable Dean Swift has uſed the freedom to dedicate his Tale of a Tub to Prince Poſterity: I have alſo ſeen a ſatirical poem, called, *Jure Divino*, dedicated, with great ſolemnity, to Prince (or rather, I believe, to King) Reaſon. If, therefore, one of theſe authors might dedicate a book to a faculty of the human mind, and the other

to

to an abſtract idea, I hope it is no great preſumption in me to dedicate mine to you, though *in ſtatu mortuorum*; eſpecially as there is not a living man who hath ſo good a claim to the compliment of a treatiſe upon my ſubject.

But a more gravelling difficulty than any of theſe kept me ſometime in ſuſpenſe, *viz.* how to get the book preſented to you, as I did not find in myſelf any inclination to depart this life, in order to tranſport it. After much trouble, I was at length relieved, by reflecting, that Mr. Pope has aſſured us, that the ghoſts of departed ladies always haunt the places in which they delighted while they were alive; and therefore, from analogy, it is to be ſuppoſed, that the ſame thing holds with regard to departed miniſters. If this is the caſe, I look upon it as certain, that your chief reſidence is in the Aſſembly-houſe at Edinburgh, where you have, in your life time, both given and received ſo much pleaſure. For though I will not limit you, in your unembodied ſtate, from making circuits through the country, and viſiting ſynods, or presbyteries, particularly in the M———ſe and G———y, where there are ſo many men after your own heart; yet, I dare ſay, you will not be abſent from the Aſſembly, or any of the quarterly meetings of the Commiſſion, which hath ſo often ſaved the church from impending dangers.

It is, therefore, my purpoſe to go to Edinburgh in May next, when the Aſſembly meets, of which I am a member, and there to lay before you my performance, hoping it will prove moſt delicious and ſavoury to all your ſenſes, to the names of which, and the manner of their preſent operation, I am wholly a ſtranger.

It is probable you have not been accuſtomed theſe two or three years by-paſt, to hear your own praiſes celebrated, and therefore I ſhall no farther launch

out into them than to ſay, that there is not one branch of the character recommended in the following pages, in which you were not eminent; and that there never was one ſtone by you left unturned, for promoting the good cauſe. ——— That you may ſtill ſit upon the throne, and, by your powerful, though inviſible, influence, make the intereſt of moderation prevail, is the ardent wiſh, and the pious prayer of,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient,

and admiring ſervant.

# PREFACE

## TO THE

# SECOND EDITION.

*GRATITUDE obligeth me to acknowledge the kind reception which the world hath given to the following generous effort, for the honour of our church. This ſhews, either that panegyric is by no means ſo unacceptable to mankind in general, as ſome ill-natured authors inſinuate; or, that this of mine hath been executed with very uncommon skill. If this laſt ſhould be the true ſolution, it would give me a double ſatisfaction. However, as the love of detraction, in ſome perſons, is incurable, and as many have ſuch ulcerated minds, that there is no poſſibility of applying to them, even in the ſofteſt and moſt friendly manner, without offending them; to prevent the ſpreading of any ſuch baleful influence, I think it proper to add a few things upon the ſtructure of this performance; part of which ſhould have accompanied the* firſt edition, *if it had not pleaſed the publiſher to print it without any communication with the author.*

*From the beginning I foreſaw it would occur as an objection, that I have not properly denominated that party in the church, which I have choſen to celebrate, by the words* moderation *and* moderate men. *It is alleged, that, for theſe two or three years by-paſt, they have made little uſe of theſe words, and have choſen rather to repreſent themſelves as ſupporters of the conſtitution, as acting upon conſtitutional principles, as lovers of order, and enemies to confuſion,* etc.; *while, at the very ſame time, the oppoſite party have taken up the*

*title*

*title of* moderation, *and pretend to be acting upon* moderate principles. *It is alſo hinted, that the juſt ſeverities, which the times render neceſſary, require a different phraſeology.*

*In anſwer to this, I obſerve, that my treatiſe has really been a work of time, (as, I hope, appears from its maturity,) the moſt part of it having been compoſed above two years ago, and before this change of language was introduced. It was originally intended only to exhibit a general view of the different parties in religion and learning among us; though it hath now admitted a very particular account of the lateſt and moſt recent differences in the church, chiefly becauſe* the preſent *ſeems likely to be an* æra *of ſome conſequence, and to be big with ſome very great events, as well as perſons. Beſides, I conſidered, that this name of* moderate men *was much longer the deſignation of my friends, than thoſe lately invented; and as they do not even at preſent allow the claim of their enemies to that character, it is probable they intended to take it up again, aſſoon as the deſigns now upon the anvil ſhall be completely executed. As to the name of* moderation *being inconſiſtent with a proper vigour, in ſupport of their own meaſures, and wholeſome ſeverities againſt their enemies, it is an objection altogether frivolous, as appears from the following example: A certain miniſter, being asked the character of a friend of his, who had come up to the Aſſembly, and particularly whether or not he was a* moderate man; *anſwered,* O yes; fierce for moderation!

*I think it proper to inform the reader, that one great reaſon of the uncommon choice of a patron to this work was, an opinion I had long entertained, and in ſupport of which I could allege very ſtrong arguments,*

*arguments, from the ſayings of ſome great men and philoſophers, as well as the practice of a famous antient nation, with regard to their kings; that the true and proper time of aſcertaining and fixing a man's character is when he has done his whole work; and that poſterity hath as good a right to the poſſeſſion and uſe of his fame after death, as his cotemporaries to his abilities during his life. At the ſame time, though the author had a particular hero in view, yet he choſe to publiſh it without mentioning his name, or place of abode, or indeed any circumſtance foreign to the character which might diſtinguiſh the perſon. The deſign of acting in this manner was, that in caſe the world ſhould univerſally agree, to aſcribe it to the ſame perſon he had in his eye, it might be ſuch a juſtification of the truth of the character, as very few modern dedications can boaſt of.*

*This invention I challenge as wholly my own; and do hereby allow and recommend the uſe of it to all future authors, hoping it will change the faſhion among writers of character and ſelf-eſteem, from uſing no dedications at all, to forming them upon a plan entirely new. Let them each keep his patron in his eye, draw his character as exactly and graphically as poſſible, and publiſh it without a name, or with this inſcription,* Detur digniſſimo: *then, if the world do univerſally aſcribe it to the perſon intended, let his name be prefixed to the ſecond edition; and it will be more true, and ſterling, and acceptable praiſe, than any hitherto found in that claſs of panegyrics. But if, on the contrary, the world ſhall aſcribe it to a different perſon, let the author acquieſce in that determination, rejoice in ſo good an expedient for preventing a blunder, and make his court to his new patron, who will hardly refuſe*

*refuſe to admit him after ſo refined and delicate a compliment. I dare not recommend any thing like this method, with reſpect to the books already printed, becauſe it would occaſion ſo violent a controverſy about the property of many dedications, as could not be ended but by the ſword; they being moſt of them addreſſed to great men, who have agreed upon this method of revenging groſs affronts, and terminating, in the laſt reſort, all important diſputes. Should any ask, why I have not followed out my own rule, by now prefixing the name of my patron? they are to underſtand, that, for reaſons known to myſelf, I intend to defer it till the nineteenth or twentieth edition.*

*If any ſhall think fit to blame me, for writing in ſo bold and aſſuming a way, through the whole of my book, I anſwer, I have choſen it on purpoſe, as being the lateſt and moſt modern way of writing; and the ſucceſs it has already met with, is a demonſtration of its propriety and beauty. The ſame thing alſo, to my great ſatisfaction, is a proof of the juſtice of a late author's ſcheme of Moral Philoſophy, who has expelled* mortification, ſelf-denial, humility, *and* ſilence, *from among the number of the* VIRTUES, and transferred them, *as he expreſſeth himſelf,* to the oppoſite column; *that is to ſay, the column of* VICES. *That ſcheme, I dare ſay, will ſtand its ground; and, as a critic, I obſerve, that it was probably the ſingle circumſtance juſt now mentioned, that brought upon the author an adverſary, who, though poſſeſſed of many truly good qualities, had the misfortune to be always eminent for modeſty, and other baſtard virtues of the ſame claſs.*

*There are ſome, I find, of opinion, that it was neither neceſſary nor uſeful for me, to give ſo many examples of the conduct of the moderate, in the illuſtration of the ſeveral maxims; and theſe eminent perſons*

*perſons themſelves ſeem to feel ſome pain from the expoſing of their virtues to the public view. But, is it not an eſtabliſhed truth, that example teaches better than precept? Is there any thing more uſual in moral writings, than to illuſtrate them by extracts from the lives of the philoſophers, and other heroes, of antient times? And ſince the advantage of example is commonly ſaid to be, that it is a living law, or that it puts life into the precept, ſurely the beſt of all examples muſt be theſe of perſons really and literally alive: neither ſhould ſuch perſons themſelves be offended with this conduct, ſince, as has been hinted above,* mortification *and* ſelf-denial, *are no more to be reckoned among the* virtues, *but the* vices.

*However, I have the comfort to reflect, that from the oppoſite opinions of thoſe who have paſſed their judgment on this performance, I am in the middle, and conſequently in the right: for there have been tranſmitted to me many noble inſtances of* moderation, *in expectation, no doubt, that they ſhould be added to my collection. I thankfully acknowlege my obligations to theſe kind contributers, but cannot make any uſe of their contributions at preſent; for, it would, at leaſt, double the bulk of the treatiſe, and thereby render* it leſs commodious for pocket carriage. *Further, I do aſſure them, it was not thro' want of materials that a greater number of examples was not produced, but from having duly weighed the proper proportion for a work of this extent; and to what hath been fixed, with ſo much deliberation, I am reſolved ſtedfaſtly to adhere.*

*It were indeed to be wiſhed that every man were left to himſelf, and allowed, in peace and quietneſs, to finiſh his own work his own way: for I have ſeldom obſerved theſe things called* hints and ſuggeſtions, *to have any other effect than to perplex and miſlead.*

*miſlead. An author's ſituation, when perſecuted with them, ſeems to me very much to reſemble that of a gentleman building a houſe, or planning out a garden, who, if he hearkens to the advice, or attempts to gratify the taſte of every viſitor, will, in all probability, produce upon the whole, a collection of inconſiſtencies, a ſyſtem of deformity.*

*I am very ſorry to be obliged thus to ſpeak in obſcurity by returning a public anſwer to private obſervations, but cannot omit taking notice that it has been much wondered at, that a certain very eminent perſon has been buried in the croud of heroes, without any particular or diſtinguiſhing compliment paid to himſelf. Now this did not by any means flow from a want of reſpect or eſteem, but from a diſtruſt of my own abilities, and a deſpair of being able to do juſtice to ſo illuſtrious a character. Neither indeed was there any great neceſſity (excepting mere compliment) of ſpreading his fame, which hath already gone both far and wide. Beſides that his many and remarkable exploits, however ſtrong and* pregnant *proofs they may be of benevolence and ſocial affection, have ſome circumſtances attending them, which render them more proper ſubjects of diſcourſe than writing. The glare would be rather too great for even the ſtrong eye-ſight of this generation to endure, when brought very near them. The ſun is the moſt glorious of all objects in the firmament, and yet though it were in the power of a painter to draw him in all his luſtre, there would hardly be found a proper place for him in the largeſt palace in Great Britain.*

*The only other objection I ſhall take notice of is, that, in one reſpect, I may be ſaid to have drawn the picture larger than the life, in as much as I ſeem to ſuppoſe, that all moderate men do, in fact, poſſeſs every*

*every one of the virtues which I have made to enter into the perfection of the character. This objection, though the one moſt inſiſted on, is evidently both falſe and fooliſh. No reader, of true diſcernment, can imagine any ſuch thing. If it were ſo, there would be no occaſion for my book at all: on the contrary, the various maxims inſerted in it, and the various examples produced in illuſtration of them, do ſhow that there are different degrees of perfection, even amongſt the moderate themſelves. They are a body, every member of which hath neither the ſame abilities, nor the ſame office. They are alſo a body moſt firmly united, for mutual defence and ſupport: ſo much, I confeſs, I intended to intimate; and that, on this account, they are intitled to a ſort of community of goods, and mutual participation of each others excellencies. A head may very well boaſt of the beauty, elegance, and activity of the hands, or the comely proportion and ſtrength of the limbs belonging to it; and yet, though they are one body, it would be ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that the head or hands are always in the dirt, when they have the feet to carry them through it.*

*This metaphor of a body, however common, is one of the juſteſt and moſt ſignificative imaginable, out of which a very long allegory might be formed; but I ſhall proſecute it no farther, at this time, except to acknowlege, that it convinces me of one real omiſſion in my plan, viz. that what hath been juſt now hinted, I ought to have inſerted as a* thirteenth maxim, *and illuſtrated it at large †. It would have been eaſy to ſhew that the moderate are remarkable for the moſt perfect union and harmony, and for a firm and ſtedfaſt adherence to each other, in the proſecution of their deſigns. Neither is there*



† This is now done in the fourth edition.

*any inſtance in which there is a ſtronger contraſt, or oppoſition between them and the orthodox, as manifeſtly appeared, from the conduct of both parties, in the General Aſſembly* 1753. *A friend of ours called the enemy, upon that occaſion,* a parcel of conſcientious fools: *had he then read the following maxims, which prove, that they have as little* conſcience, *as* wiſdom, *it is probable he would have beſtowed on them their* true *and proper character.*

ECCLE-

# ECCLESIASTICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

## INTRODUCTION.

THE reader will doubtleſs agree with me, that moderation is an excellent thing, and particularly the nobleſt character of a church-man. It is alſo well known, that as all churches have uſually in them a moderate, and a zealous, high-flying, wild party; ſo our church hath, at preſent, a certain party, who glory in, and fight for moderation; and who (it is to be hoped juſtly) appropriate to themſelves wholly the character of moderate men; neither is it a ſmall preſage of a glorious and bleſſed ſtate of the church, in its approaching periods, that ſo many of our young men are ſmitten with the love of moderation, and generally burn with deſire to appear in that noble and divine character.

This hath inſpired me with the ambition and expectation of being helpful in training up as many as are deſirous of it, in this moſt uſeful of all ſciences: for however perfectly it is known, and however ſteddily practiſed by many who are adepts; and notwithſtanding there are ſome young men, of pregnant parts, who make a ſudden and ſurprizing proficiency, without much aſſiſtance; yet I have often obſerved, that there are ſeveral perſons, who err, in many inſtances, from the right path, bogle at ſundry particular ſteps of their leaders, and take a long time before they are thorough-

ly confirmed in their principles and practice. The ſame perſons alſo, by an unſtable conduct, or by an imprudent, or unſeaſonable diſcovery of their deſigns, have brought a reproach upon their party, and been an obſtruction to whatever work they had then in hand.

Theſe bad effects, I humbly conceive, flow chiefly, if not only, from the want of a complete ſyſtem of moderation, containing all the principles of it, and giving a diſtinct view of their mutual influence one upon another, as well as proving their reaſonableneſs, and ſhewing, by examples, how they ought to be put in practice.

There is no work of this kind, to my knowlege, yet extant, which renders my preſent undertaking of it the more laudable, and will, I hope, render it the more acceptable.

I muſt inform the reader, that after I was fully convinced of the neceſſity of ſome ſuch piece as what follows, but before I entered upon it myſelf, I earneſtly entreated ſeveral of the moſt eminent men of the moderate ſtamp among us, theſe burning and ſhining lights of our church, who are, and are eſteemed to be, our leaders, that ſome of them would ſet about it. However they all devolved it upon me, and made this ſatisfying excuſe for themſelves, that they were ſo buſied in *acting* moderation, that they could not have time to *write* upon it. This ſoon led me to think what would become of many noble deſigns, and what advantage our diſcontented zealots might take, if any of the expert ſteerſmen of this eccleſiaſtical veſſel of ours ſhould retire from the helm, but ſo long time as would be neceſſary to bring a work of ſuch a nature, to the perfection in ſtrength, ſymmetry, and elegance, that the reader will perceive, even this of mine is arrived at.

I ſhall

I ſhall now proceed to the principal part of the work, after I have informed the reader of the plan of it, which is briefly this, to enumerate diſtinctly, and in their proper order and connection, all the ſeveral maxims upon which moderate men conduct themſelves: and foraſmuch as the juſtice of many of them, being refined pieces of policy, is not very evident at firſt ſight, I ſhall ſubjoin to each an illuſtration, and confirmation of it from reaſon, or experience, or both. *N. B.* I ſhall make but very little uſe of ſcripture, becauſe that is contrary to ſome of the maxims themſelves, as will be ſeen in the ſequel.

## MAXIM I.

*All eccleſiaſtical perſons, of whatever rank, whether principals of colleges, profeſſors of divinity, miniſters, or even probationers, that are ſuſpected of hereſy, are to be eſteemed men of great genius, vaſt learning, and uncommon worth, and are, by all means, to be ſupported and protected.*

ALL moderate men have a kind of fellow-feeling with hereſy, and as ſoon as they hear of any one ſuſpected, or in danger of being proſecuted for it, zealouſly, and unanimouſly riſe up in his defence. This fact is unqueſtionable. I never knew a moderate man in my life, that did not love and honour a heretic, or that had not an implacable hatred at the perſons and characters of hereſy-hunters; a name with which we have thought proper to ſtigmatize theſe ſons of Belial, who begin and carry on proſecutions againſt men for hereſy in church courts.

It is related of the apoſtle John, and an ugly ſtory it is, that upon going into a public bath, and obſerving the heretic Cerinthus there before him, he retired with the utmoſt precipitation, leſt the edi-

fice ſhould fall and cruſh him when in company with ſuch an enemy of the truth. If the ſtory be true, the apoſtle's conduct was ridiculous and wild; but Dr. Middleton has ſhown that the ſtory is not true, and indeed the known benevolence and charity of John's writings make it highly improbable. However, not to enter into that controverſy, whether it be true or not, the conduct of all moderate men is directly oppoſite.

As to the juſtice of this maxim, many ſolid reaſons may be given for it. — Compaſſion itſelf, which is one of the fineſt and moſt benevolent feelings of the human heart, moves them to the relief of their diſtreſſed brother.—Another very plain reaſon may be given for it; moderate men are, by their very name and conſtitution, the reverſe, in all reſpects, of bigotted zealots. Now, it is well known, that many of this laſt ſort, both clergy and common people, when they hear of a man ſuſpected of hereſy, conceive an averſion at him, even before they know any thing of the caſe; nor after he is acquitted (as they are all of them commonly in our church courts) can they ever come to entertain a favourable opinion of him. The reverſe of this then is to be as early and as vigorous in his defence, as they are in his proſecution, and as implicite in our belief of his orthodoxy, as they are in their belief of his error.

I remember, when I was diſcourſing once to this purpoſe, a certain raw unexperienced perſon ſaid, he had always thought, that not moderation, but lukewarmneſs and indifference to truth, was the reverſe of exceſſive zeal, and that moderation was ſituated in the middle betwixt the two. To whom I anſwered, Young man, you do not reflect, that no fiery man can be reſiſted but by one as fierce, nor overcome but by one fiercer than himſelf: if, therefore, no-body would oppoſe the zealots, but

ſuch

ſuch calm midſmen as you mention, in every ſuch inſtance the balance of power muſt lean to their ſide, and the poor heretic muſt fall a ſacrifice, to the no ſmall detriment of the cauſe of moderation; which, by the by, is commonly ſupported by the heretics in their ſtations, and therefore they deſerve a grateful return.

This brings to my mind another reaſon for the maxim, *viz.* that heretics being ſo nearly related to the moderate men, have a right to claim their protection out of friendſhip and perſonal regard. This ſerves a very noble end, for it vindicates the Chriſtian religion from the objection of ſome infidels, who affirm, that it does not recommend private friendſhip; now, moderate men having all a very great regard to private friendſhip, and perſonal connexions, do, by their practice, which is the moſt ſolid way, confute this ſlander.

I may add to theſe another argument for the great character of heretics, as aſſerted in the maxim, which I picked up from the preaching of a ſeceding miniſter. He told his hearers, that when the devil looks out for an inſtrument to propagate error, he never makes choice of a weak ſilly man, but one able and learned; as well knowing, I ſuppoſe, that though God can ſupport his cauſe by any inſtrument whatever, yet he needs always the beſt, and moſt ſufficient he can get. Now, though I hope no man will reckon me of this fanatic's principles, ſo far as to think the devil the ſource of error, yet the citation ſerves my purpoſe, as it ſhews that he himſelf was convinced of the ability and learning of heretics; and all the world knows, that the teſtimony of an enemy is the ſtrongeſt of all evidences upon a man's ſide.

I ſhall conclude this maxim with obſerving, that ſuch tenderneſs for heretics, however due from ſome, is yet, in many of the moderate character,

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an inſtance of the moſt heroic and generous friendſhip. It is quite diſintereſted, as they themſelves run not the ſmalleſt hazard of ever being in the like circumſtances. Heretics are commonly an honeſt ſort of people, but, with all their book-learning, of no great ſtock of prudence or policy. They publiſh and aſſert whatever they believe upon all points, without conſidering the reception it is like to meet with, from thoſe of oppoſite principles. They affront the public to its face, which lord Shaftſbury tells us ought not to be done. On the other hand, men, thorough-paced in moderation, diſcover their principles only at ſuch times, and to ſuch perſons, as are able to bear them. By this means they preſerve themſelves from hereſy; and indeed they cannot poſſibly fall into it, unleſs by miſtake: in which caſe, as ſoon as they are challenged, (if it is like to be attended with any temporal inconveniency) they deny it, explain it away, or repent, and aſk pardon.

In all this they follow the noble example of Mr. ———, who, in the aſſembly debates upon profeſſor Simſon's affairs, happening to ſay ſomething that was challenged by one preſent as hereſy, immediately replied, *Moderator, if that be hereſy, I renounce it.*

## MAXIM II.

*When any man is charged with looſe practices, or tendencies to immorality, he is to be ſcreened and protected, as much as poſſible, eſpecially if the faults laid to his charge be, as they are incomparably well termed in a ſermon, preached by a hopeful youth, that made ſome noiſe lately,* good humoured vices.

The reaſon upon which this maxim is founded, may be taken from the reaſons of the former, *mutatis*

*tatis mutandis*; there being ſcarcely any of them that does not hold equally in both caſes. A Libertine is a kind of practical heretic, and is to be treated as ſuch. Dr. Tillotſon obſerves, in one of his ſermons, that the worſt of all hereſies is a bad life: now, if inſtead of *worſt*, which is an uncomely expreſſion, you would read *greateſt*, in that paſſage, then a Libertine is the greateſt of all heritics, and to be honoured in proportion. Even the apoſtle Paul (who is very ſeldom of any uſe to us in our reaſonings) ſeems to ſuppoſe, that they are men of moſt knowlege, who are moſt free and bold in their practice; and that they are only weak brethren who are filled with ſcruples. The weak man is reſtrained and confined by his narrow conſcience, but the ſtrong man believeth that he may eat, and, by parity of reaſon, drink all things.

In order to underſtand the nature of *good-humoured vices*, the reader may pleaſe to take notice, that it is an obſervation of lord Shaftſbury, that "the beſt time for thinking upon religious ſubjects, is when a man is merry, and in good humour:" and ſo far is this obſervation drawn from nature, that it is the time commonly choſen for that purpoſe, by many who never heard of his lordſhip, or his writings. Whatever, therefore, ſerves to promote merriment, and heighten good-humour, muſt, in ſo far, ſerve for the diſcovery of religious truth. But as there are many ways of making a perſon merry, which narrow-minded people will call *vice*, from thence, in compliance with common language, ariſes the new-compound *good-humoured vices*. It is not, however, ſo to be underſtood, as if either the inventor of it, or thoſe who love and patroniſe him, mean any thing by it but what is, *in their apprehenſion*, both innocent and laudable.

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Let it alſo be obſerved, that as gravity is almoſt a neceſſary conſequence of ſolitude, *good-humoured vices* are certainly *ſocial pleaſures*, and ſuch as flow from, and ſhow benevolence; and this is an affection for which our whole fraternity have the higheſt regard, inſomuch that no ſurer mark can be taken of a man's being ONE OF US, than the frequent returns of this expreſſion in his diſcourſes or writings.

It will ſerve further to the ſupport of this maxim, that according to modern diſcoveries, there is a great analogy between the *moral virtues*, or, if you will, the *ſcience of morals*, and the *fine arts*; and it is on account of this analogy, that moſt of the preſent reigning expreſſions upon the ſubject of morals, are borrowed from the arts, as *beauty*, *order*, *proportion*, *harmony*, *decency*, etc. It is alſo eſtabliſhed long ſince, and well known as a principle in the fine arts, that a certain freedom and boldneſs of manner is what chiefly conſtitutes grace and beauty. Why then ſhould not approbation be founded upon the ſame grounds in both caſes? Why ſhould not a bold practice be as beautiful in real, as a bold hand is in imitated life, eſpecially as all great geniuſes have actually laid claim to this as their peculiar privilege, not to be confined to common forms; and that, in oppoſition to the bulk of mankind, who, through want of taſte, are not able to reliſh the fineſt performances in any of the kinds?

I muſt not, however, omit taking notice, to prevent miſtakes, of one exception that muſt be made from this maxim; that is, that when the perſon, to whoſe charge any faults are laid, is reputed orthodox in his principles, in the common acceptation of that word, or comes in by orthodox influence, in that caſe, they are all to be taken for granted as true, and the evil of them ſet forth in the

the livelieſt colours. In conſequence of this, he is to be proſecuted and torn to pieces on account of theſe crimes. But if it ſo happen, that he cannot be convicted upon a trial, then it is beſt to make uſe of things as they really are; that is to expreſs ſuſpicions, to give ingenious and dubious hints, and, if poſſible, ruin him without any trial at all. There was a noble example of this given a few years ago, in the caſe of a ſettlement in the bounds of a preſbytery, very many of whom are eminent in moderation. In that caſe, there were ſeveral faults laid to the charge of the candidate; and yet, tho' he himſelf very much inſiſted upon an enquiry into their truth, and a judgment upon their relevancy, the preſbytery wiſely refuſed to do either the one or the other, but left them to have their own natural weight in fame, rumour, and converſation.

The neceſſity of this exception is very evident; for, in the ſuppoſed caſe, all the reaſons for protection to the young man fail: to ſatisfy himſelf of which, let the reader view theſe reaſons, as they are annexed to the firſt maxim, and ſave my book from the deformity of repetition.

## MAXIM III.

*It is a neceſſary part of the character of a moderate man, never to ſpeak of the Confeſſion of Faith but with a ſneer; to give ſly hints, that he does not thoroughly believe it; and to make the word* orthodoxy *a term of contempt and reproach.*

The Confeſſion of Faith, which we are now all laid under a diſagreeable neceſſity to ſubſcribe, was framed in times of hot religious zeal: and therefore it can hardly be ſuppoſed, to contain any thing agreeable to our ſentiments, in theſe cool and refreſhing days of moderation. So true is this, that I do not remember to have heard any moderate man

ſpeak

ſpeak well of it, or recommend it in a ſermon, or private diſcourſe, in my time. And, indeed, nothing can be more ridiculous, than to make a fixed ſtandard for opinions, which change juſt as the faſhion of clothes and dreſs. No complete ſyſtem can be ſettled for all ages, except the maxims I am now compiling and illuſtrating; and their great perfection lies in their being ambulatory, ſo that they may be applied differently, with the change of times.

Upon this head ſome may be ready to object, that if the Confeſſion of Faith be built upon the ſacred ſcriptures, then, change what will, it cannot, as the foundation upon which it reſts remains always firm and the ſame. In anſwer to this, I beg leave to make a very new, and therefore ſtriking compariſon: when a lady looks at a mirror, ſhe ſees herſelf in a certain attitude and dreſs, but in her native beauty and colour; ſhould her eye, on a ſudden, be tinctured with the jaundice, ſhe ſees herſelf all yellow and ſpotted; yet the mirror remains the ſame faithful mirror ſtill, and the alteration ariſes not from it, but from the object that looks at it. I beg leave to make another compariſon: when an old philoſopher looked at the evening ſtar, he beheld nothing but a little twinkling orb, round and regular like the reſt; but when a modern views it with a teleſcope, he talks of phaſes, and horns, and mountains, and what not? now, this ariſes not from any alteration in the ſtar, but from his ſuperior aſſiſtance in looking at it. The application of both theſe ſimilitudes I leave to the reader.

But beſides theſe general reaſons, there is one very ſtrong particular reaſon why moderate men cannot love the Confeſſion of Faith: moderation evidently implies a large ſhare of charity, and conſequently a good and favourable opinion of thoſe that

that differ from our church; but a rigid adherence to the Confeſſion of Faith, and high eſteem of it, nearly borders upon, or gives great ſuſpicion of harſh opinions of thoſe that differ from us: and does not experience riſe up and ratify this obſervation? Who are the narrow-minded, bigotted, uncharitable perſons among us? who are the ſevere cenſurers of thoſe that differ in judgment? who are the damners of the adorable heathens, Socrates, Plato, Marcus Antonius, etc? In fine, who are perſecutors of the inimitable heretics among ourſelves? Who but the admirers of this antiquated compoſition, who pin their faith to other men's ſleeves, and will not endure one jot leſs or different belief from what their fathers had before them! It is therefore plain, that the moderate man, who deſires to incloſe all intelligent beings in one benevolent embrace, muſt have an utter abhorrence, at that vile hedge of diſtinction, the Confeſſion of Faith.

I ſhall briefly mention a trifling objection to this part of our character, that by our ſubſcription we ſacrifice *ſincerity*, the queen of virtues, to private gain and advantage. To which I anſwer, in the firſt place, That the objection proves too much, and therefore muſt be falſe, and can prove nothing: for, allowing the juſtice of the objection, it would follow, that a vaſt number, perhaps a majority, of the clergy of the church of England are villains; their printed ſermons being, many of them, diametrically oppoſite to the articles which they ſubſcribe. Now, as this ſuppoſition can never be admitted, by any charitable man, the objection from whence it flows, as a neceſſary conſequence, muſt fall to the ground.

But further, what is there more inſincere in our ſubſcriptions, than in theſe expreſſions of complement and civility, which all acknowlege lawful,

although they rarely expreſs the meaning of the heart! The deſign is ſufficiently underſtood in both caſes; and our ſubſcriptions have this advantage above forms of compliment, in point of honeſty, that we are at a great deal of pains uſually, to perſuade the world that we do not believe what we ſign, whereas the complaiſant gentleman is very ſeldom at any pains about the matter.

What is ſaid might ſuffice in ſo clear a caſe; but I am here able to give a proof of the improvement of the age, by communicating to the reader, a new way of ſubſcribing the Confeſſion of Faith, in a perfect conſiſtency with ſincerity, if that be thought of any conſequence: it is taken from the method of atteſting ſome of our gentlemen elders to the General Aſſembly. Many inſiſt, that they ought to be atteſted, and do atteſt them, as qualified in all reſpects, if the atteſtors are wholly ignorant about the matter; becauſe, in that caſe, there is no evidence to the contrary, and the preſumption ought to ly on the favourable ſide. Now, as every new diſcovery ſhould be applied to all the purpoſes for which it may be uſeful, let this method be adopted by the intrants into the miniſtry, and applied to their ſubſcription of the Confeſſion of Faith. Nothing is more eaſy than for them to keep themſelves wholly ignorant of what it contains; and then they may, with a good conſcience, ſubſcribe it as true, becauſe it ought to be ſo.

## MAXIM IV.

*A good preacher muſt not only have all the above and ſubſequent principles of moderation in him, as the ſource of every thing that is good, but muſt, over and above, have the following ſpecial marks and ſigns of a talent for preaching.* 1. *His ſubjects muſt be confined to* ſocial duties. 2. *He muſt recommend them only from* rational conſiderations, *viz. the*

*beauty*

*beauty and comely proportions of* virtue, *and its advantages in the preſent life, without any regard to a future ſtate of more extended ſelf-intereſt.* 3. *His authorities muſt be drawn from* heathen writers, NONE, *or as* few *as poſſible, from* ſcripture. 4. *He muſt be very* unacceptable *to the* common people.

Theſe four marks of a good preacher, or rules for preaching well, (for they ſerve equally for both purpoſes) I ſhall endeavour diſtinctly to illuſtrate and confirm, that this important branch of my ſubject may be fully underſtood.

As to the *firſt* of theſe rules, that a preacher's ſubjects muſt be confined to *ſocial duties*, it is quite neceſſary in a moderate man, becauſe his moderation teaches him to avoid all the high flights of evangelic enthuſiaſm, and the myſteries of grace, which the common people are ſo fond of. It may be obſerved, nay, it is obſerved, that all of our ſtamp avoid the word *grace* as much as poſſible, and have agreed to ſubſtitute the *moral virtues* in the room of the *graces of the Spirit*, which is the orthodox expreſſion. And indeed it is not in this only, but in all other caſes, that we endeavour to improve the phraſeology, and ſhow, that beſides ſentiment, even in language itſelf, we are far ſuperior to, and wiſer than our fathers before us. I could ſhow this by a great many examples, but that it would be too tedious, and therefore only add, to the one mentioned above, that where an antient orthodox man, or even an old faſhioned modern, that thinks religion can never be mended, either in matter or manner, would have ſaid *a great degree of ſanctification*, a man of moderation and politeneſs will ſay, *a high pitch of virtue.* Now, as this is the caſe, it is plain, a moderate preacher muſt confine his ſubjects to ſocial duties chiefly,

and not inſiſt on ſuch paſſages of ſcripture as will, by the very repetition of them, contaminate his ſtile, and may perhaps diffuſe a rank ſmell of orthodoxy through the whole of his diſcourſe.

After all, I cannot refuſe, that it is ſtill a more excellent way, for thoſe who have talents equal to the undertaking, to ſeize an orthodox text, explain it quite away from its ordinary ſenſe, and conſtrain it to ſpeak the main parts of our own ſcheme. Thus a noble champion of ours choſe once for his ſubject, Rom. viii. 2. *For the law of the ſpirit of life, in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death*; which he explained in this manner; *the law of the ſpirit of life*, that is, the moral ſenſe —; *in Chriſt Jeſus*, — which is the ſum of the Chriſtian religion, *etc.* The advantage of this way is, that it is tearing the weapons out of the hands of the orthodox, and turning them againſt themſelves. And it may perhaps, in time, have the effect to make our hearers affix our ſenſe to their beloved ſcriptures; or, at leaſt, which is the next thing, prevent them from being able to find any other. — However, I muſt acknowlege, that this way of doing is not for every man's management; and therefore I continue my advice to the generality, ſtill to adhere to the rule as firſt delivered.

The *ſecond* rule will be eaſily confirmed, that duties are to be recommended only from *rational conſiderations*. What can be imagined more fooliſh than to contradict this? if there be any thing in a ſermon different from rational conſiderations, it muſt be irrational, that is to ſay, abſurd. It is in this part of our ſcheme that we, moderate men, obtain a glorious triumph over our adverſaries and deſpiſers. Who but muſt ſmile, when they hear the contemptible, vulgar, ignorant, hot-headed country elders, or ſilly women, led captive by them

at

at their will, ſaying, they do not love this rational way of going to heaven!

But to explain this method a little further; the rational way of preaching is ſometimes ſet in oppoſition to the pathetic way of raiſing the paſſions. This laſt is what we greatly diſapprove of: there is ſomething immoderate in the very idea of raiſing the paſſions, and therefore it is contrary to our character: nor was it ever known, that a truly moderate man raiſed or moved any affection in his hearers, unleſs perhaps the affection of anger againſt himſelf. We leave that to your vehement baulers, or your whining lamenters, that are continually telling, *they will ſpend and be ſpent*, for the ſalvation of their hearers, which lord Shaftſbury elegantly derides, by calling it *the heroic paſſion of ſaving ſouls*. And let any unprejudiced perſon judge, if there is not ſomething vaſtly great, ſomething like a heroic fortitude in that man, that can talk of future judgment, heaven and hell, with as much coolneſs and indifference as if it were a common matter. To ſay the truth, indeed, we do not often meddle with theſe alarming themes. However, as I obſerved upon the firſt mark of a good preacher, that it is glorious to rob the orthodox of a text, and make it bend to our plan; ſo it is alſo an uncommon excellence, to treat theſe ſubjects with calmneſs, and to prove that we ought to do ſo. Thus a great proficient in our way, lately preaching upon Acts xxiv. 25. where Paul made Felix to tremble by his diſcourſe, proved from it, that miniſters ought not to raiſe the paſſions of their hearers. An ignorant obſerver would have thought that the paſſion of terror was raiſed in Felix, to a great degree, and that he was little better than a Cambuſlang convict. But mark the lucky expreſſion our hero got hold of, *as he reaſoned of righteouſneſs*, etc.;

*as he reaſoned*, that is, *argued*, and *proved by rational conſiderations.*

This example gives me a fine opportunity of making a kind of contraſt, and ſhewing, from fact, the difference between an orthodox and a moderate preacher. I myſelf heard one of the firſt kind, upon the text juſt now mentioned; and his firſt obſervation was, That the apoſtle Paul was a faithful *reprover*; ſpeaking home to Felix, 1. Of *righteouſneſs*; to convince him of any iniquity he had been guilty of in his government. 2. Of *temperance*; which he ſaid ſhould be tranſlated *continence*, and was probably intended as a reproof to him and Druſilla who were living in adultery. His next and main obſervation was, That Felix was *convicted*, but *ſtifled* his convictions, and delayed his repentance, ſaying, *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee.* Then followed a great deal of ſtuff, which I do not incline to tranſcribe, but it was juſt what the vulgar call experimental preaching, I ſuppoſe to diſtinguiſh it from rational.

But how contrary to this did our moderate friend. He firſt obſerved, that St. Paul was a *moral*, or a *legal preacher*; diſcourſing of *righteouſneſs* and *temperance*, without a word of *faith:* and then, that he was a *reaſoning preacher*, that did not ſtrive to raiſe peoples paſſions, but informed their judgment. I was indeed a little diſappointed upon conſulting the original, to find that the word uſed, which is διαλεγομένε, ſignifies only, *continuing his diſcourſe*, and ſo might be either in the *reaſoning* or *pathetic* way: but I was ſatisfied by reflecting, that the word evidently includes both, and ſo *reaſoning* being the beſt, it is to be ſuppoſed the apoſtle preferred it.

Agreeably to this rule, lord Shaftsbury, and after him a bright luminary in our own church, gives an advice to all moderate clergymen not to affect

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that idle title of *embaſſadors* or *plenipotentiaries from heaven*, ſo fondly claimed by zealots: and I take the liberty to ſuppoſe, that the reaſon of the advice was the ſame in both, *viz. That under this character zealots put on an air of authority, and deliver their meſſage with a pathos, to which they would otherways have been ſtrangers.* His lordſhip, indeed, explodes the conceit ſufficiently; he aſks, *Gentlemen, where is your commiſſion? how has it been conveyed? where are the letters patent? where the credentials?* with many more queſtions, eaſier for his lordſhip to aſk, than for SOME PERSONS to anſwer.

The *third* rule, *viz.* recommending *virtue* from the authority and examples of the *heathens*, is not only highly proper, becauſe they were very virtuous, but hath this manifeſt advantage attending it, that it is a proper way of reaſoning to two quite oppoſite kinds of perſons. One is, ſuch as are real Chriſtians, who will be ſhamed by the ſuperior excellence of mere heathens, as they call them, and whom they ſo much deſpiſe. The other is, our preſent living heathens, who pay no regard to the Chriſtian religion at all, and therefore will only be moved by the authority of the perſons they eſteem. It is well known, there are multitudes in our iſland, who reckon Socrates and Plato to have been much greater men than any of the apoſtles, although (as the moderate preacher, I mentioned lately, told his hearers) the apoſtle Paul had an univerſity education, and was inſtructed in Logic by profeſſor Gamaliel. Therefore let religion be conſtantly and uniformly called *virtue*, and let the *heathen philoſophers* be ſet up as the great patterns and promoters of it. Upon this head, I muſt particularly recommend M. Antoninus by name, becauſe an eminent perſon, of the moderate character, ſays, his meditations is the BEST book that ever was written for forming the heart.

But

But perhaps the laſt part of this third rule will be thought to need moſt illuſtration and defence, *viz.* that NONE at all, or *very little uſe* is to be made of *ſcripture:* and really, to deal plainly, the great reaſon of this is, that very few of the ſcripture-motives and arguments are of the moderate ſtamp; the moſt part of them are drawn from orthodox principles: for example, the apoſtle Paul cannot even ſay, *Husbands, love your wives*, but his argument and example comes in theſe words, *as Chriſt alſo loved the church.* The apoſtle John alſo ſpeaks in a very myſterious way, of union with Chriſt, and abiding in him, in order to bringing forth fruit, which is his way of ſpeaking for a virtuous life. Now, let any indifferent perſon judge, how this kind of expreſſion, and others of the like nature, ſuch as mortifying the deeds of the body through the Spirit, would agree with the other parts of our diſcourſes; they would be like oppoſite kinds of fluids which will not compound, they would be quite heterogeneous, which is againſt all the rules of fine writing, and hinders it from being an uniform, beautiful, and comely Whole. Horace, in his Art of Poetry, gives this as his very firſt obſervation,

*Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam*
*Jungere ſi velit*———

Which my learned reader cannot fail both to remember and underſtand, and which I deſire him to apply to this ſubject we are now upon. If it be ſaid, that ſermons are not poems, and therefore not to be compoſed by the rules of poetry: I anſwer, it is a miſtake; many of our ſermons, eſpecially thoſe compoſed by the younger ſort among us, are poems; at leaſt they are full of poetical flights, which comes much to the ſame thing: not to mention that the rule agrees equally to proſe and poetry. How often have I heard parts of Mr. Addiſon's

Cato,

Cato, Young's Night Thoughts, and divers other poems, in ſermons; and to ſay the truth, they were none of the worſt parts of them. However, I would offer my advice, as that of a perſon of ſome experience, to all young preachers, not to do Dr. Young the honour of borrowing any thing from him again, becauſe he is a ſnarling, ſullen, gloomy, melancholy mortal, cites a great deal of ſcripture, and particularly, becauſe he has given a vile ſneer at the practice I am juſt now recommending, in the following two lines of his Univerſal Paſſion.

*When doctors ſcripture for the claſſics quit,*
*Polite apoſtates, from God's grace to wit.*

I have only another advice to give upon this head, and that is, that when our young preachers think proper to borrow from modern printed poems, they would be pleaſed to tranſproſe them a little, ſo to ſpeak, that they may not be too eaſily diſcerned by young gentlemen who read the Magazines. However, I am in great hopes we ſhall ſhortly be quite above the neceſſity of borrowing from any body, in order to make our ſermons poetry: there are ſome perſons of genius among us, that can make very good poetry of their own, of which I could produce ſome recent inſtances, but I do not think it at preſent expedient.

The *fourth* and laſt rule for a preacher, is, that he muſt be *very unacceptable to the people.* The Spectator, I remember, ſomewhere ſays, that moſt of the critics in Great Britain ſeem to act as if the firſt rule of dramatic writing were, *not to pleaſe.* Now, what they make the firſt rule of writing plays, I make the laſt rule for compoſing ſermons; not as being the *leaſt*, but the *moſt* important. It is indeed the grand criterion, the moſt indiſpenſible rule of all. Though one ſhould pretend to adhere to all the former rules, and be wanting in this alone, he would

would be no more than *a ſounding braſs, or a tinkling ſymbal*; pardon the expreſſion, the importance of the matter requireth it. I ſhall put a caſe; Suppoſe a man ſhould have the approbation of the very beſt judges, *viz.* thoſe whoſe taſte we ourſelves allow to be good, if at the ſame time he happens to be acceptable to the common people, it is a ſign that he muſt have ſome ſubtle refined fault, which has eſcaped the obſervation of the good judges aforeſaid; for, there is no man, even of our own fraternity, ſo perfect and uniform in judging right, as the common people are in judging wrong.

I hope there is little need of aſſigning reaſons for this great characteriſtic of the art of preaching; I ſuppoſe it will be allowed to be, if not altogether, at leaſt next to ſelf-evident: all the ſeveral reaſons that have been given for the particular maxims of moderation, concur in eſtabliſhing this; for the people are all declared enemies of moderation, in its principles and practice; and therefore, if moderation be right, they muſt be wrong. There is a known ſtory of a heathen orator, who, when the common people gave a ſhout of applauſe, during his pronouncing an oration, immediately turned about to a friend, and aſked him, what miſtake he had committed. Now, if an audience of vulgar heathens was allowed to be ſo infallibly wrong in their judgment, the ſame thing muſt hold, *a fortiori*, in an audience of vulgar Chriſtians.

From this it evidently follows, that a popular preacher eſſentially ſignifies, a bad preacher; and it is always ſo underſtood by us, whenever we uſe the expreſſion. If we but hear it reported of any one, that he is very popular among the lower ſort, we are under no difficulty of giving his character, without having heard him preach ourſelves. In this caſe, fame is a certain guide to truth, by being inverted; for we deteſt and deſpiſe him, preciſely in the

the ſame proportion that the people admire him. On the other hand, the truly moderate man is not only above the applauſe of the multitude, but he glories in their hatred, and rejoices in himſelf, in proportion as he has been ſo happy as to provoke and diſoblige them. Of this I could give ſeveral notable examples, were it not that it muſt certainly offend their modeſty, not only to praiſe them in print, but even to publiſh their higheſt virtues.

But now, upon the whole, as a great critic obſerves, that there is ſometimes more beauty ſhown in a compoſition, by receding from the rules of art, when an important point is to be gained, than by ſtrictly adhering to them; ſo all theſe rules notwithſtanding, it ſhall be allowable for any moderate man, upon an extraordinary emergency, to break them for a good end: as for inſtance, he may ſpeak even in Whitfield's ſtile, when his ſettlement has the misfortune to depend upon the people; which I have known done with good ſucceſs. We are alſo well ſatisfied, that Mr. T———r of Norwich, and ſuch like firſt-rate writers, ſhould make pompous collections of ſcripture texts, as their truly laudable intention is, by altering Chriſtianity, to reconcile it to moderation and common ſenſe; and to find out a meaning to words, which the writers of them, as living in the infancy of the church, had not diſcernment enough to intend.

To conclude this maxim, it would be too formal for me, and too tedious to the reader, to enumerate all the objections that are, by ſome, raiſed againſt our way of preaching: I ſhall therefore mention but one, and ſhow it is falſe, hoping that the reader will ſuppoſe, there is no more foundation for any of the reſt. It is alleged, there is no method in our diſcourſes, but that they conſiſt in random flights, and general declamations. Nothing more untrue. The polite reader, or hearer, knows

knows that there may be an excellent and regular method, where there are no formal diſtinctions of *firſtly*, *ſecondly*, and *thirdly*: but, to cut off all occaſion of cavil, let the world hereby know, that one of our moſt famed preachers choſe once for his text, John xi. 29. and of that verſe the following words *He ſtinketh*. He obſerved, we had there (or thereabouts) a deſcription of the threefold ſtate of a bad man; firſt, he *ſickened*; ſecondly, he *died*; thirdly, he *ſtank*. This I take to have been an accuracy in point of method, to which it will not be eaſy to find a parallel.

## MAXIM V.

*A miniſter muſt endeavour to acquire as great a degree of politeneſs in his carriage and behaviour, and to catch as much of the air and manner of a fine gentleman, as poſſibly he can.*

This is uſually a diſtinguiſhing mark between the moderate and the orthodox, and how much we have the advantage in it is extremely obvious. Good manners is undoubtedly the moſt excellent of all accompliſhments, and, in ſome meaſure, ſupplies the place of them all when they are wanting. And ſurely nothing can be more neceſſary to, or more ornamental and becoming in a miniſter: it gains him eaſy acceſs into the world, and frees him from that rigid ſeverity which renders many of them ſo odious and deteſtable to the polite part of it. In former times, miniſters were ſo monkiſh and recluſe, for ordinary, and ſo formal when they did happen to appear, that all the jovial part of mankind, particularly rakes and libertines, ſhunned and fled from them; or, when unavoidably thrown into their company, were conſtrained, and had no kind of confidence to repoſe in them: whereas now, let a moderate, modern, well-bred

miniſter

miniſter go into promiſcuous company, they ſtand in no manner of awe; and will even ſwear with all imaginable liberty. This gives the miniſter an opportunity of underſtanding their character, and of perhaps ſometimes reaſoning in an eaſy and genteel manner againſt ſwearing, which, though indeed it ſeldom reforms them, yet it is as ſeldom taken amiſs, which ſhews the counſel to have been adminiſtered with prudence.

How is it poſſible that a miniſter can underſtand wickedneſs, unleſs he either practiſes it himſelf, (but much of that will not yet paſs in the world,) or allows the wicked to be bold in his preſence? To do otherwiſe, would be to do in practice what I have known narrow-minded bigotted ſtudents do as to ſpeculation, *viz.* avoid reading their adverſaries books becauſe they were erroneous; whereas it is evident no error can be refuſed till it be underſtood.

The ſetting the different characters of miniſters in immediate oppoſition, will put this matter paſt all doubt, as the ſun of truth riſing upon the ſtars of error, darkens and makes them to diſappear. Some there are, who may be eaſily known to be miniſters, by their very dreſs, their grave demure looks, and their confined preciſe converſation. How contemptible is this! and how like to ſome of the meaneſt employments among us; as ſailors, who are known by their rolling walk, and taylors, by the ſhivering ſhrug of their ſhoulders! But our truly accompliſhed clergy put off ſo entirely every thing that is peculiar to their profeſſion, that were you to ſee them in the ſtreets, meet with them at a viſit, or ſpend an evening with them in a tavern, you would not once ſuſpect them for men of that character: agreeably to this, I remember an excellent thing ſaid by a gentleman, in commendation of a

miniſter, that *he had nothing at all of the clergyman about him.*

I ſhall have done with this maxim, when I have given my advice as to the method of attaining to it, which is, that ſtudents, probationers, and young clergymen, while their bodies and minds are yet flexible, ſhould converſe, and keep company, as much as may be, with officers of the army, under five and twenty, of whom there are no ſmall number in the nation, and with young gentlemen of fortune, particularly ſuch as, by the early and happy death of their parents, have come to their eſtates before they arrive at the years of maturity. Scarce one of theſe but is a noble pattern to form upon, for they have had the opportunity of following nature, which is the all-comprehenſive rule of the antients, and of acquiring a free manner of thinking, ſpeaking, and acting, without either the pedantry of learning, or the ſtiffneſs contracted by a ſtrict adherence to the maxims of worldly prudence.

After all, I believe I might have ſpared myſelf the trouble of inſerting this maxim, the preſent riſing generation being, of themſelves, ſufficiently diſpoſed to obſerve it; this I reckon they have, either conſtitutionally, or perhaps have learned it from the inimitable lord Shaftſbury, who, in ſo lively a manner, ſets forth the evil of univerſities, and recommends converſation with the polite peripatetics, as the only way of arriving at true knowlege.

## MAXIM VI.

*It is not only unneceſſary for a moderate man to have much learning, but he ought to be filled with a contempt of all kinds of learning but one, which is to underſtand Leibnitz's ſcheme well; the chief parts*

*parts of which are ſo beautifully painted, and ſo harmoniouſly ſung by lord Shaftsbury, and which has been ſo well licked into form and method, by the late immortal Mr. H——n.*

This maxim is neceſſary, becauſe without it the former could not be attained to. Much ſtudy is a great enemy to politeneſs in men, juſt as a great care of houſhold affairs ſpoils the free careleſs air of a fine lady: and whether politeneſs is to be ſacrificed to learning, let the impartial world judge. Beſides, the ſcheme which I have permitted the moderate man to ſtudy, doth actually ſuperſede the uſe of all other learning, becauſe it contains the knowlege of the *whole*, and the *good* of the *whole*: more than which, I hope, will be allowed to be not only needleſs but impoſſible.

This ſcheme excells in brevity, for it may be underſtood in a very ſhort time; which, I ſuppoſe, prompted a certain clergyman to ſay, that any ſtudent might get as much divinity as he would ever have occaſion for in ſix weeks. It is alſo quite agreeable to the improvements that have been made in arts and ſciences of late years; for every thing is now more compendiouſly taught, and more ſuperficially underſtood, than formerly, and yet as well, and better to all the purpoſes of life. In the very mechanic arts, laborious diligence gives way to elegance and eaſe; as the lumpiſh, ſtrong, old Gothic buildings, to more genteel, though ſlighter, modern ones. There have been ſchemes publiſhed for teaching children to read by way of diverſion. Every year gives us a ſhorter method of learning ſome branch of knowlege. In ſhort, in theſe laſt days the quinteſſence of every thing has been extracted, and is preſented us, as it were, in little phials; ſo that we may come to all learning by one act of intuition. Agreeably to all this, have

we not ſeen in fact, many ſtudents of divinity brought up in hot beds, who have become ſpeakers in general aſſemblies, and ſtrenuous ſupporters of a falling church, before their beards were grown, to the perfect aſtoniſhment of an obſerving world!

I muſt alſo obſerve, that there is a providential fitneſs of that ſcheme, in another reſpect, for the preſent age and time. When the fees of colleges, and expence of boarding is raiſed; when the rate of living is quite altered, and when a ſpiteful landed-intereſt, and a heedleſs parliament, have refuſed to grant any augmentation to our ſtipends, there is no other way remains for us, but to cheapen our education, by taking leſs time to it, and arriving at the point deſigned by a nearer cut. Then there will be no need at all for the critical ſtudy of the ſcriptures, for reading large bodies of divinity, for an acquaintance with church hiſtory, or the writings of theſe poor creatures, the Chriſtian fathers, but all is abſorbed into the good of the *whole*: of which I may ſay, ſeriouſly and ſoberly, what D. Tillotſon ſays ironically of tranſubſtantiation, that it is not only true, but it is all truth, and will not ſuffer any thing to be true but itſelf.

We find that moderate men have moſtly, by conſtitution, too much ſpirit to ſubmit to the drudgery of the kinds of learning above-mentioned, and deſpiſe all who do ſo. There is no controverſy now about Arian, Arminian, Pelagian, or Socinian tenets, but only whether this good of the whole ſcheme holds. This ſhews, by the by, the injuſtice and malignity of theſe poor beings, the Seceders, who cry out of erroneous doctrines in the church, and aſſert, that Arminianiſm is publicly taught by many. It is known, that they mean by the moderate men, when they ſpeak ſo; and yet I will venture to affirm, that there are not a few young men

men of that character, who, if they were aſked, could not tell what the five Arminian articles are, ſo little do they regard Arminianiſm. I myſelf, the reader will perceive, know the number of them, but whether I know any more about them or not, I ſhall preſerve as a ſecret in my own mind.

It will perhaps be objected againſt this maxim, that the moderate party commonly ſet up on a pretence of being more learned than their adverſaries; and are, in fact, thought to be very learned in their ſermons by the vulgar, who, for that reaſon, hate him. Now, as to their pretending to be more learned than their adverſaries, it is moſt juſt, for they have, as has been ſhewn, got hold of the ſum total of learning, although they did not calculate it themſelves, and as to their being thought learned in their ſermons by the vulgar, it is ſufficient for that purpoſe that they be unintelligible. Scattering a few phraſes in their ſermons, as *harmony, order, proportion, taſte, ſenſe of beauty, balance of the affections*, etc. will eaſily perſuade the people that they are learned: and this perſuaſion is to all intents and purpoſes the ſame thing as if it were true. It is one of theſe deceitful feelings which Mr. H——, in his eſſays, has ſhown to be ſo beautiful and uſeful. Theſe phraſes they may eaſily get in books, not above the ſize of an octavo; and if they incline to be very deep, they may get abundance of citations from the antient heathen authors in Cudworth's Intellectual Syſtem, and moſtly tranſlated to their hand.

I ſhall now ſubjoin a ſhort catalogue of the moſt neceſſary and uſeful books, the thorough underſtanding of which will make a truly learned moderate man: *Leibnitz's Theodicee, and his Letters, Shaftsbury's Characteriſtics, Collins' Enquiry into human liberty, all Mr. H——n's pieces, Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, D——n's beſt Scheme,*

*and H———'s Moral Eſſays* †; the two laſt are Scots authors, and it is with pleaſure I can aſſure my countrymen they are by far the moſt perfect of them all, carrying the conſequences of the ſcheme to the moſt raviſhing height. As to poetry, it will be ſufficient to read *the Pleaſures of the Imagination*, and *the Tragedy of Agis*, if it be publiſhed, becauſe in it dramatic poetry is carried to the ſummit of perfection; and it is believed, by the author's friends, that there never will be a tragedy publiſhed after it, unleſs by ſomebody that is delirious. But whether the knowlege of this effect, and the compaſſion thence ariſing to future authors, may not, in a perſon of ſo much humility and ſelf-denial, and of ſo conſummate and diſintereſted benevolence, as that theatrical divine, wholly prevent the publication, I cannot tell; and therefore muſt leave it to be brought forth by the midwife Occaſion, from the womb of Time.

But to give a ſtill higher proof of my deep concern for the improvement and edification of ingenuous

† It hath been ſuggeſted to me, that another author of our own country, ought to have been added to the above catalogue; but I judged it improper for two reaſons. One is, that I do not find that author in ſo high eſteem among the moderate, as to deſerve a place in ſo very nice, and choſen a collection. But the other, and principal reaſon is, that the author here intended, profeſſeth himſelf a Sceptic, the meaning of which, if I underſtand it right, is, either that he does not believe there is any ſuch thing as *truth*, or that he himſelf is but *ſeeking* after truth, and has not yet found it. Now this is by no means the caſe with the moderate, who are already in poſſeſſion of the *ne plus ultra* of human knowlege. For, though ſome of their doctrines are changeable, by reaſon of the eſſential difference of perſons, things, and times; yet, during the period of any doctrine, I have no where known ſtronger, or ſeverer dogmatiſts, as appears from their neglect of farther enquiry, and ſovereign contempt of all oppoſers. In a certain univerſity, about ſeven years ago, (how it is now I cannot certainly tell,) if a man had ſpoken honourably of Dr. Samuel Clark, it cannot be conceived with what deriſion he was treated by every boy of ſixteen, who was wiſer than to pay any regard to ſuch a numſcull, an enemy to the doctrine of neceſſity, and wholly ignorant of the moral ſenſe.

nuous youth, I have taken the pains to extract very faithfully the ſum and ſubſtance of the above library, and do here preſent it to the world, under a name which is not without a meaning, though not intelligible to all, *viz.*

## The ATHENIAN CREED.

I believe in the beauty and comely proportions of Dame Nature, and in almighty Fate, her only parent and guardian, for it hath been moſt graciouſly obliged, (bleſſed be its name,) to make us all very good.

I believe that the univerſe is a huge machine, wound up from everlaſting by neceſſity, and conſiſting of an infinite number of *links* and *chains*, each in a progreſſive motion towards the zenith of perfection, and meridian of glory; That I myſelf am a little glorious piece of clock-work, a wheel within a wheel, or rather a pendulum in this grand machine, ſwinging hither and thither by the different impulſes of fate and deſtiny; That my ſoul (if I have any) is an imperceptible bundle of exceeding minute corpuſcles, much ſmaller than the fineſt Holland ſand; and that certain perſons, in a very eminent ſtation, are nothing elſe but a huge collection of neceſſary agents who can do nothing at all.

I believe that there is no ill in the univerſe, nor any ſuch thing as virtue abſolutely conſidered; that thoſe things, vulgarly called *ſins*, are only errors in the judgment, and foils to ſet off the beauty of Nature, or patches to adorn her face: That the whole race of intelligent beings, even the devils themſelves (if there be any) ſhall finally be happy; ſo that Judas Iſcariot is by this time a glorified ſaint, and it is good for him that he hath been born.

In

In fine, I believe in the divinity of L. S——, the ſaintſhip of Marcus Antoninus, the perſpicuity and ſublimity of A——e, and the perpetual duration of Mr. H———n's works, notwithſtanding their preſent tendency to oblivion. Amen.

## MAXIM VII.

*A moderate man muſt endeavour, as much as he handſomely can, to put off any appearances of devotion, and avoid all unneceſſary exerciſes of religious worſhip, whether public or private.*

I fully intended, upon this part of my ſubject, to have been at ſome pains in ſhewing the great indecency of a grave and *apparently* ſerious carriage, or of introducing any religious ſubject of converſation into promiſcuous company: but when I conſider how ſucceſsfully all *viſible* religion was attacked, both by wits and preachers, immediately after the reſtoration of king Charles II. how conſtantly any diſpoſition of this ſort hath been borne down by all men of taſte ever ſince that time, which is now near a whole century, as alſo how ſeldom any religious diſcourſe is to be met with at this day, either among clergy or laity, I ſhall only rejoice in myſelf, and congratulate my reader upon the purity of the times, and proceed to the other part of the maxim.

Now, as to the public exerciſe of religious worſhip; altho' a certain meaſure of them is reaſonable enough, and though the office by which we have our bread, obliges us to be often engaged in them, yet a truly moderate man, without renouncing his calling, has it in his power to pare off a great many ſuperfluities with which the clergy are apt to overload religion, and render it unpalatable to the polite world.

Being members of church judicatories, and we hope

hope, the majority in moſt of them, the moderate party can diſcourage and ſtifle all motions for extraordinary faſts or thankſgivings, which experience has taught us ſerve only to promote idleneſs, and diſcourage induſtry. Upon the day that Henry V. fought at Agincourt, a ſolemn faſt was kept in England for his ſucceſs; and ſome hiſtorions are pleaſed to ſay, that the prayers of the nation had ſome ſhare in procuring the victory; but later hiſtories have diſproved this: and now it can be demonſtrated, upon paper, that a faſt day in Scotland looſes 50,000 pounds to the nation, while no-body can make any calculation what it wins. For this reaſon, it was very refreſhing to hear, as we did lately, that even in the moſt diſtant and northern corners of this country, there is a ſet of clergy of a heroic ſpirit, who are reſolved to reform their people, and beat them out of that unpolite and barbarous inclination, which many of them ſtill retain, of hearing ſermons.

With a view to the ſame good end, we can curtail our buſineſs at home, both as to the number and length of our pulpit-performances. In our own families, though it would not perhaps yet be convenient to imitate the *beau monde* ſo very quickly, in diſcarding the worſhip of God altogether, yet we may, by degrees, ſometimes omit it, through hurry of buſineſs, at other times by dropping, now and then at leaſt, ſome parts of it: and in gentlemen's families, take care to give diſcreet intimations that we do not incline to put them out of their ordinary way, or occaſion the leaſt interruption to the mirth of the company.

Sometimes, indeed, it may happen, by a concurrence of circumſtances, that one of us may, at bed-time, be unequally yoked with an orthodox brother, who may propoſe a little unſeaſonable devotion

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Now, as to the public exerciſe of religious worſhip; altho' a certain meaſure of them is reaſonable enough, and though the office by which we have our bread, obliges us to be often engaged in them, yet a truly moderate man, without renouncing his calling, has it in his power to pare off a great many ſuperfluities with which the clergy are apt to overload religion, and render it unpalatable to the polite world.

Being members of church judicatories, and we hope

hope, the majority in moſt of them, the moderate party can diſcourage and ſtifle all motions for extraordinary faſts or thankſgivings, which experience has taught us ſerve only to promote idleneſs, and diſcourage induſtry. Upon the day that Henry V. fought at Agincourt, a ſolemn faſt was kept in England for his ſucceſs; and ſome hiſtorions are pleaſed to ſay, that the prayers of the nation had ſome ſhare in procuring the victory; but later hiſtories have diſproved this: and now it can be demonſtrated, upon paper, that a faſt day in Scotland looſes 50,000 pounds to the nation, while no-body can make any calculation what it wins. For this reaſon, it was very refreſhing to hear, as we did lately, that even in the moſt diſtant and northern corners of this country, there is a ſet of clergy of a heroic ſpirit, who are reſolved to reform their people, and beat them out of that unpolite and barbarous inclination, which many of them ſtill retain, of hearing ſermons.

With a view to the ſame good end, we can curtail our buſineſs at home, both as to the number and length of our pulpit-performances. In our own families, though it would not perhaps yet be convenient to imitate the *beau monde* ſo very quickly, in diſcarding the worſhip of God altogether, yet we may, by degrees, ſometimes omit it, through hurry of buſineſs, at other times by dropping, now and then at leaſt, ſome parts of it: and in gentlemen's families, take care to give diſcreet intimations that we do not incline to put them out of their ordinary way, or occaſion the leaſt interruption to the mirth of the company.

Sometimes, indeed, it may happen, by a concurrence of circumſtances, that one of us may, at bed-time, be unequally yoked with an orthodox brother, who may propoſe a little unſeaſonable devotion

votion between ourſelves, before we ly down to ſleep: but there are twenty ways of throwing cold water upon ſuch a motion; or, if it ſhould be inſiſted upon, I could recommend a moderate way of complying with it, from the example of one of our friends, who, on a like occaſion, yielded ſo far, that he ſtood up at the back of a chair, and ſaid, *O Lord, we thank thee for Mr. Bayle's Dictionary. Amen.* This was ſo far from ſpoiling good company, that it contributed wonderfully to promote ſocial mirth, and ſweetened the young men, in a moſt agreeable manner, for their reſt. —— Whatever is forced is unnatural, and ought to be avoided; and therefore, what the Puritan ſaid of ſquare caps, we may apply to many modes of devotion, *That he would not wear them, becauſe his head was round.*

The neceſſity of ſuch a conduct cannot be denied, when it is conſidered what effect the length and frequency of public devotion has had in driving moſt of the gentry from our churches altogether; and that even ſuch of them as ſtill vouchſafe their company ſometimes, are yet driven away from the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, where the ſervice is expected to be more tedious and tireſome. Now, the only way to regain them to the church, is to accommodate the worſhip, as much as may be, to their taſte: the manner of doing which is ſo well known, that I will not ſpend time in explaining it.

I confeſs there has been ſometimes an ugly objection thrown up againſt this part of my argument, *viz.* that this deſertion of public worſhip, by thoſe in high life, ſeems, in fact, to be co-temporary with, and to encreaſe, in a pretty exact proportion, to the attempts that have been, and are made to ſuit it to their taſte. It is alleged, that they are led to ſuch a conduct, not by the dictates of their reaſon, but by the depravation of their hearts, and therefore make uſe of the behaviour of the clergy as an excuſe, and juſtification of their conduct. In anſwer to this objection, I ſhall not pretend to ſay what uſe gentlemen may ſometimes make of our conduct, for I have known them often very prepoſterous in their judgment, condemning others for what they freely indulge in themſelves, and no leſs unthankful,

ful, rendering evil for good. But ſtill I ſay, there remains no ſtrength in the objection to a man of moderate principles; for it plainly comes much to the ſame thing at laſt, whether the mountain comes to the mouſe, or the mouſe to the mountain. If I ſhould meet a friend half-way, that had got a diſtance from me, though he ſhould not move a foot, I am ſure we would be nearer one another, than if I had kept my place as well as he.

But whatever be in this, I muſt acknowlege, that to be conſtantly whining and praying, looks ſo extremely orthodox-like, that I cannot help conceiving a prejudice at it, for this very reaſon; and I doubt not but every moderate man will have the ſame fellow-feeling. In truth, a great abundance of devotion has ſuch a tendency to inflame one with zeal, that any man, who would maintain his moderation, had beſt keep out of the reach of ſuch enſnaring influence. Beſides, it has been an old remark, and I begin to ſuſpect there is ſome ground for it, that let one embrace what ſyſtem of divinity he will, it is impoſſible to pray but according to the orthodox ſyſtem. And whatever laudable pains have been taken, by ſome of our friends, to avoid this inconvenience, yet, from what I have obſerved, in the moſt ſucceſsful of them, I muſt own, I can, at preſent, ſee no other remedy but to deal as little that way as poſſible.

## MAXIM VIII.

*In church ſettlements, which are the principal cauſes that come before miniſters for judgment, the only thing to be regarded, is, who, the patron, and the great and noble heritors are; the inclinations of the common people are to be utterly deſpiſed.*

That this maxim is invariably obſerved, by all moderate men, is certain, and may be atteſted by all that ever were preſent at a General Aſſembly of this national church. The caſe is not now as formerly, when preſentations were held a grievance; for a preſentation is, *all in all* to a moderate man; and when there is no preſentation, the greatneſs and nobility of the heritors upon

on one ſide. I was witneſs once to a cauſe (which indeed unhappily miſcarried) but there was a noble ſtand made for it by the moderate party, becauſe there was a *lord* upon the ſide to the *minority*, although he had *no intereſt* at all in the pariſh, but a ſmall bit of ground which he had got from a neighbour, in order to run a dike ſtraight. This appearance greatly rejoiced me, as being a token to what perfection the ſpirit of moderation was arrived.

There are many reaſons upon which this maxim is founded; as the implacable hatred we bear to the elders and common people, and their conſtant wrong judgment, which has been illuſtrated above. As this is ſo very evident, I cannot paſs it, without expreſſing my grief and aſtoniſhment, that ſo clear-ſighted an author, and, in all reſpects, ſo agreeable to our ſentiments, as lord Shaftſbury, ſhould have ſaid, in his Eſſay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour, that "it be-"longs to men of ſlaviſh principles, to affect a ſupe-"riority over the vulgar, and to deſpiſe the multitude." This hath made me doubt the truth of an aſſertion of Mr. G. L. one of our own diſciples, "that perfection "is attainable in this life;" for, if ever any one attained to perfection, ſurely lord Shaftſbury was the man. But, to leſſen the difficulty a little, it is probable he had ſomething in his view, quite different from ſettling of kirks, when he wrote in this manner; for had he lived to our times, and been an heritor in Scotland, I can hardly allow myſelf to think, that ever he would have appeared on the ſide of the Chriſtian people; though without all queſtion, he would have been choſen an elder, and ſent up, *duly atteſted*, to the General Aſſembly.

But to return; the natural reſpect we owe to thoſe in great and high ſtations, claims from us the teſtimony of it, required in the maxim. There is an original and eſſential difference between gentry and common people, which ought to be particularly kept up here. For this, we have the authority of a certain worthy laird in the country, who always maintained, upon his mind, a ſenſe of his dignity, not as a man, but as a gentleman. Of this diſpoſition he gave the following laudable inſtance:

ſtance: Being a member of the kirk-ſeſſion in his pariſh, the exciſe-officer happened to come before them for fornication; and beſides the eccleſiaſtical cenſure, it was thought proper to apply to the civil magiſtrate to get him fined according to law: but as the law appoints different fines for men in different ſtations, when ſome propoſed he ſhould be fined at the rate of a gentleman, the worſhipful member above-mentioned, though known to be very zealous againſt vice, ſtrenuouſly oppoſed his having ſo much honour, and gave the following excellent reaſon for it; "Since God almighty has been "pleaſed to make a diſtinction between gentlemen and "other men, why ſhould not we keep up this diſtinc-"tion in all caſes?" and ſo he was fined only as a commoner.

Another thing pleads ſtrongly for gentlemen having the chief hand in ſettling kirks, that now-a-days very few of our principal gentry attend ordinances, or receive any benefit by a miniſter after he is ſettled, unleſs, perhaps, talking of the news at a private viſit, or playing a game at back-gammon; and therefore it is but fair, that, in lieu of the edification of the common people, they ſhould have the honour or profit of conferring the benefice. I ſhall only further add, that having no view of attending upon him for ordinary, they muſt be the beſt judges of his preaching-gifts, as being moſt diſintereſted: for which reaſon, non-reſiding heretors, inſtead of deſerving to be cut out altogether, as the ſtupid and undiſcerning orthodox would have it, are by much to be preferred to thoſe that reſide.

The reader will eaſily perceive, that I have here given much better reaſons for this conduct than thoſe commonly aſſigned, *viz.* the law, in the caſe of patrons; and the payment of the ſtipend, in the caſe of heretors. For, as to the firſt of theſe, it is quite from the purpoſe, for the law maintains its own ground, as far as it goes, and is irreſiſtable; the only queſtion is, how we ſhall act as to what is left to us to determine: if the law hindered us to determine on any ſide we pleaſed, ſuch cauſes never would be pleaded before us. As to the other, about the heretors paying the ſtipend, it is not juſt, for the whole nation pays it: the heretor gets

his lands with that burden upon them firſt; and when one buys land from another, he never pays for the ſtipend: ſo that really an heretor is never a penny the poorer of the ſtipend, except that happening commonly to ſee the money firſt, he may, perhaps, be ſorry that any body ſhould get it but himſelf. However, though theſe reaſons be not ſufficient at bottom, I deny not but it may be very proper to aſſign them to ſuch as are ignorant enough to yield to them, or who have ſo ſqueamiſh ſtomachs as not to be able to digeſt the ſolid reaſons upon which I have grounded my maxim. It is with the mind as with the body, it muſt be fed with ſuch things as it is able to bear, and as will beſt agree with its frame and conſtitution.

## MAXIM IX.

*While a ſettlement is carrying on, the canditate, againſt whom there is a ſtrong oppoſition from the people, muſt be looked upon, and every where declared to be, a perſon of great worth, and remarkable abilities; provided always, that if ever the ſame perſon, after he is ſettled, be at pains, and ſucceed, in gaining the peoples affection, he ſhall then fall as much below the ordinary ſtandard in his character, as before he was raiſed above it.*

Both parts of this maxim will appear very reaſonable to all that ſee with our eyes. The people being againſt a man is a certain ſign of his being a good preacher, as has been proved above: it is alſo a pretty ſure ſign of his being of moderate principles, *which make the comers thereunto perfect*; and theſe two things are ſufficient to juſtify us in raiſing his character. It is indeed often abſolutely neceſſary, when a proceſs is in agitation, that it may help him out with a ſcanty concurrence, and have an influence upon the church-courts, which are compoſed of a mixt multitude. Nor is it eaſy to conceive, how excellent and well-invented a weapon this is, the giving a man an extraordinary and high character. It neceſſarily imprints a kind of veneration of him on the minds of his judges; and hath this peculiar advantage, that there is no parrying of it; for whatever ſome few, of different principles, may think, they dare not

not plainly contradict it. Every man has it in his power to ſpeak well of another, but no-body muſt take the liberty to ſpeak ill of a man in a public court, unleſs he can alſo venture to give him a lybel. Many a time have I heard young men highly extolled in church-courts, when their ſettlement was in dependence, who, in ſtrict truth, were but meddling kind of men, and ſome of them very heavy, who afterwards proved no ſmall incumbrance upon the moderate body.

As to the other part of the maxim, taking away their character for ability, when they apoſtatiſe to orthodoxy: this will be eaſily accounted for, if it be remembered how they came by it. It was freely given them, and therefore it may be taken away at pleaſure: it was given to bring them in as an additional ſtrength to the moderate intereſt; and therefore, when they forſake that intereſt, it is but juſt to deprive them of it. If any ſhall object, that this is not agreeable to the ſtrict rules of veracity, I deſire it may be remembered, that the preſent faſhionable ſcheme of moral philoſophy is much improved in compariſon of that which prevailed ſometime ago. Virtue does not now conſiſt in *acting agreeably to the nature of things*, as Dr. Clarke affirms; nor in *acting according to truth*, which an old ſchoolmaſter, one Wollaſton, once wrote a book to prove; but in *the good of the whole*; and therefore an illuſtrious and noble end ſanctifies the means of attaining it. Our ſentiments, in this reſpect, are deſcribed by an anonymous poet, who, I believe, meant no good to us; however it points out the character pretty plainly thus:

*To ſecond him roſe ſurely* PETER,
*An angry bigot for good-nature:*
*That truth ſhould valued be by matter*
*And weight he thought*
*That inch of truth, in courteſy,*
*To ſpan of intereſt ſhould give way;*
*And pound of gain, for ounce of lye,*
*Is cheaply bought.*

If it be farther objected, that ſtill this only ſatisfies ourſelves, whereas, in the caſe in hand, it is neceſſary

to ſatisfy the world. As to this, we can freely ſay, that the man was good, but now he is bad, and that is no contradiction; for, though the Confeſſion of Faith maintains the infallible perſeverance of the ſaints in grace, yet we never affirmed the neceſſary perſeverance of men in moderation; theſe two things being entirely diſtinct, the one from the other. Some of our friends do fall away now and then: our ſtrength, for ordinary, conſiſts in young men; for there are ſeveral who, in old age, through the decay of their faculties begin to incline a little to orthodoxy, and then we term them not *old men*, but *old wives*. However, there are alſo ſome, who not only perſevere, but glorioufly improve in moderation to the lateſt old-age, and to their dying day; of which number was the late Rev. Mr. J. R. in K. whoſe name I have thought proper to record in this immortal work, that it may be had in everlaſting remembrance.

## MAXIM X.

*Whenever we have got a ſettlement decided over the belly of perhaps the whole people in the pariſh, by a majority in the General Aſſembly, the victory ſhould be improved, by appointing ſome of the orthodox oppoſers of the ſettlement to execute it, eſpecially thoſe of them that pretend to have a ſcruple of conſcience at having an active hand in any ſuch ſettlement.*

They do not deſerve a victory who know not how to puſh it, or to improve the advantage they have gained. A ſentence of the General Aſſembly, even as of any other court, ſignifies nothing if it be not executed. To reſt ſatisfied with the victory we have gained, by the bare deciſion, would indeed be yielding it back again, and loſing, in fact, what we gained in appearance. This is ſelf-evident; but the next point is, who ſhall be employed in executing it, thoſe who appointed it, or thoſe who pretend a ſcruple of conſcience at doing what appears to their diſordered intellects to be what they call *ſinful*? Now, as to this, allow me only to aſk a few plain queſtions. Is not every ſociety divided into the governing and the governed, the maſters and the ſervants? What is the ſubject of any debate in the

the Aſſembly, that ends in a vote, but to determine who is the one, and who is the other? When once a vote has made us maſters, does not the ſame vote make the minority ſervants? And do I need to aſk further, if there is any piece of drudgery to be performed, who it belongs to, the maſters or the ſervants? Apply this then to the caſe in hand; who would hazard his own life in fording a river if he had a ſervant, to try the depth of it before him? Who would chooſe to go to a pulpit under a ſhower of ſtones, from an enraged populace, if he had others under his authority, whom he could ſend upon the ſame ungracious errand?

Now, the uſefulneſs of this conduct is very evident; for, it is plain, they will either obey or diſobey: if the firſt is the caſe, then we ſhall have the honour of bringing them, and they themſelves the profit and advantage of being brought, into the hatred and abhorrence of the common people; in commendation of which ſtate, enough has been ſaid already. If they diſobey, they muſt be depoſed, and caſt out as incorrigible, to make way for thoſe that are better than themſelves: this will be to the advantage of the church, for young men, *cæteris paribus*, are much better than old.

As this method of purging the church of corrupt members is like to be a prevailing meaſure in our days, I ſhall endeavour to ſupport it by a few, but theſe demonſtrative arguments; in moſt of which, indeed, I ſhall have little more than the honour of recording the ſentiments and reaſoning of ſome eminent men, that were members of the two laſt General Aſſemblies.

In the *firſt* place, it is certain, that the command of a proper authority is ſufficient to make any action not only innocent and lawful, but perfectly right, and ſtrictly obligatory; inſomuch, that if an executioner ſhould be commanded to hang his father or ſon, for praying to God, or reading his bible; nay, if one of Jeſus Chriſt's diſciples had happened to have been a Roman ſoldier, and ſhould have been commanded to crucify his maſter, he ſhould have betrayed the moſt egregious ignorance of the Chriſtian religion, had he made the leaſt difficulty in excuting ſuch orders.

It is to no purpoſe here to object the immutability of

moral laws, and the ſupreme authority of God; for, if obedience to human authority be one of his laws, as it plainly is, then all his other laws muſt be ſubmitted to ſuch alterations and ſuſpenſions, as our ſuperiors think proper: and although the apoſtles do indeed ſometimes ſpeak of *obeying God rather than man*, yet we can explain this as eaſily as we do another text, in the third chapter of the Romans, which ſeems to teach, that *we ſhould not do evil that good may come*; for, as in the one caſe, whatever promotes good, cannot be evil; ſo, in the other, if human authority be once duly interpoſed, it is obeying God to comply with whatever is enjoined thereby: and therefore it is impoſſible that ever there can an interference happen. Beſides, ſome allowance muſt, no doubt, be made for the difference of times, and diſadvantages which all the antient writers lay under, the late fine improvements in the ſcience of morals not having then been excogitated. But I can aſſure the reader, the principle which I have laid down, is now the doctrine of this church, wherein both divines and lawyers, who are members of our Aſſemblies, are intirely agreed, and will not ſuffer any body to call it in queſtion. And what an obvious beauty has moral virtue gained from the delicate and ſkilful hands that have lately been employed in dreſſing her ladyſhip! She was once ſtiff and rigid, like ice or cold iron; now ſhe is yieding as water, and, like iron hot from the furnace, can eaſily be beaten into what ſhape you pleaſe. And here I muſt ſay, I think it ſome pity that ſo fine a genius as Grotius did not flouriſh ſomewhat later, or that the moral ſenſe was not ſtarted a little earlier, and ſo that great man preſerved from falling into ſo groſs a blunder as the maintaining, that "even military authority may be reſiſted; and that a caſe can be given, "when a ſoldier ought to diſobey orders:" for now it is a ſettled point, that even eccleſiaſtical authority (which if there were any difference, I allow ought rather to be the milder of the two) is ſufficient to bear down before it, what were once called the *eternal*, no leſs, and *immutable laws of morality*; and, by divine authority, is *paramount to divine authority itſelf*.

I ſhall only obſerve two very plain and clear advantages

tages in this principle, whereby it will appear, how happy it is that the church hath fallen ſo intirely in with it, and proceeds ſo uniformly upon it.

The *firſt* is, that in caſe of neceſſity, an action which nobody would chuſe perhaps to take the weight of upon them, may yet be done without the leaſt hazard of any body's being called to account for it in the other world. If the doer of an action were to be the judge of its lawfulneſs, he might be damned perhaps for doing it, in caſe it were found to be wrong; but upon this principle of implicite obedience to his ſuperiors, there is no repelling his defence: it was not his province to judge whether it was lawful or unlawful; and the Aſſembly or Commiſſion who gave the order, being bodies politic, are, by that time, all diſſolved, and appear only in the capacity of individuals.

The other advantage is this, that if the ſupreme court, of any kind, were allowed to be the only proper judge of the lawfulneſs of its own appointments, it would be impoſſible, in the nature of things, that ever there could be a ſeparation in the church, or a rebellion in the ſtate. The juſtneſs of this conſequence is ſo evident, that I ſhall not ſpend any time in illuſtrating it, but heartily wiſh the principle, from which it flows, were univerſally embraced.

In the *ſecond* place, the diſobedient brethren have but one pretence for their conduct, which is groundleſs, *viz.* a *ſcruple of conſcience:* as to which, hear Dr. Goodman, a noble Engliſh writer; "a tender conſcience is "nothing elſe but an ignorant and uninſtructed mind; or "a ſickly, melancholy, and ſuperſtitious underſtanding." I could eaſily ſhew, that there is no ſuch thing as a real ſcruple of conſcience: the lawyers in the General Aſſembly, who are men of as great penetration as any in the land, have, moſt of them, plainly declared, that they do not conceive it poſſible. A certain learned gentleman, of this court, hath aſſured us, that taking away miniſters ſtipends would enlighten their conſcience. The renowned author of Hudibras is known to be of the ſame opinion: from which two authorities, I will endeavour to mend Dr. Goodman's definition, for a

*tender*

*tender conſcience* is not an *ignorant mind*, but a *full ſtomach*: this accounts for appearances better, and particularly for the epithet of *tender* commonly given to it, as all phyſicians are agreed, that a wound upon a full ſtomach is very dangerous. Having thus rooted up the very foundation of this pretence, it is needleſs to go through the ſeveral particulars inſiſted upon by the diſobedient as ſtraitning to them; and therefore I ſhall, but in a word, mention one of them: they pretend it is a profane farce to confer, in a ſolemn manner, the care of the ſouls of a certain people, when nothing is really conferred but a legal title to a benefice: as alſo, that the candidate cannot conſciencioufly anſwer ſeveral of the queſtions commonly put on theſe occaſions. But is it not extremely ſtrange, that any body can be ſo dull as not to regard theſe queſtions in their only true and proper light as a neceſſary piece of formality, without which a charge of horning for the ſtipends could not be raiſed? And as to the other part of the objection, whether it be not much more a mock ceremony, to ordain a man to a congregation, when a title to the benefice cannot be conferred, I ſhall leave the reader to determine, as if the caſe were his own.

The *third* principle, upon which our conduct is founded, is of ſuch undoubted verity, that the bare mentioning of it is ſufficient to convince all the world, how little it ſtands in need of any proof; accordingly no moderate man views it in any other light than as an axiom, or ſelf-evident truth, namely, that if any excuſe for diſobedience were once admitted, or any indulgence granted to theſe tender-conſcienced inferiors, there would be an end to all government in an inſtant; neither commands nor obedience could proceed one ſtep further, but every individual inſtrument of power, in that fatal ſociety, aſtoniſhed at the monſtrous phenomenon, would ſtare at one another; all the wheels of that political machine would ſtop at once; nay, would ſplit into ten thouſand pieces: every relation and connection of their parts would be inſtantly diſſolved, and the beautiful Whole would ruſh into a wild chaos of anarchy and confuſion. The reader will eaſily believe I am too wiſe to offer a

proof

proof of an axiom or ſelf-evident truth ‡; however, I think it but fair to inform him, that ſuch is the nature of paper and ink, that they have not the power of doing it all the juſtice even in narration, of which it is capable elſewhere. Whoever has heard the demonſtrative tone, or beheld the infallible air, and geſture of certainty, with which it has been aſſerted by an Aſſembly orator, would be aſhamed that he ever ſtood in need to be put in mind of it; for my own part, I am ſo intirely influenced by it, that if the moſt faithful, diligent, and uſeful ſervant ſhould, in the humbleſt manner, repreſent to me, that he had a ſcruple about executing any of my orders, and beg to be excuſed, ſuppoſe from ſhaving me on Sunday morning, and I ſhould unfortunately be ſo far off my guard, as for once to indulge him, I would immediately diſſolve my whole family, and never more think of lodging with a living ſoul, under the ſame unhappy roof.

Againſt this principle, however, ſome have preſumed to object particular inſtances in ſcripture-hiſtory of ſuch excuſes being actually admitted, without any apparent diſſolution of the conſtitution; ſuch as Gideon's paſſing from his order to his ſon to kill the two princes of Midian, and ſlaying them himſelf; and that of Saul, who, when his guards refuſed to fall upon the prieſts, committed that affair to another, without any farther noiſe. Now, not to mention the difficulty of arguing from facts of an antient date, cited only by one author, and that very courtly, I humbly conceive theſe inſtances produced, make directly againſt the objection; for, it appears to me very evident, that the kingdom was taken from Saul, and given to David for this very reaſon, he being unfit to govern, by thus allowing his authority to be trampled upon; nor will it be eaſy to aſſign any different reaſon, why none of the poſterity of Gideon were ever

‡ I deſire that this general aſſertion may not be miſunderſtood, as if I intended a reflection upon ſome late diſcoveries in moral philoſophy: for, though an axiom, or ſelf-evident truth, cannot be proved, yet a great genius, who can do any thing, may take a few of theſe ſame axioms, digniſy and adorn them, by writing an eſſay round about each of them, and prove that they ought to be called *feelings*, This is greatly to the advantage of the commonwealth of learning, as experience hath ſhewn.

ever permitted to rule Iſrael. There are ſome later inſtances of that ſort, nearer home, thrown up by ſhallow politicians; as that of the hangman at Ayr, who refuſed to execute the whigs in king Charles IId's time; and that which happened a few years ago among ourſelves, when the civil government overlooked the diſobedience of a ſet of refractory clergymen, who refuſed to read the act of parliament anent captain Porteous. In the firſt of theſe caſes, the judges acted in a laudable manner, for they deprived the man of his benefice; and for the crime of this diſobedience, I am perſuaded he died childleſs, for I have never heard of any of his poſterity in that part of the country. In the other caſe, I confeſs the government was much to be blamed; and have long been of opinion, that their deteſtable lenity, at that time, was the cauſe of the late rebellion, which followed ſoon after it. It is to be hoped they will take warning for the time to come; for I am perſuaded one other inſtance of the ſame kind would effectually ſeat the Pretender upon the throne of Britain.

The laſt principle which I ſhall mention, and which, with the reſt, I am ſure is abundantly ſufficient to ſupport the maxim laid down for our conduct, is, that the beſt method of conviction, and, of all others, the moſt proper for a church-court, is that of authority, ſupported in its higheſt rigour by cenſures, which may be felt by men of the dulleſt capacities, as depoſition and ſuſpenſion from benefice as well as office. If the goodneſs of an argument, or the excellency of a method, is to be meaſured by the frequency of recourſe that is had to it, I think none can diſpute precedency with this: it muſt be allowed to be, of all others, the moſt Chriſtian method; it reigned over the whole church, without a rival, for many ages: and though Proteſtants, for a while, pretended to find fault with it, in the hands of their enemies, yet which of them all, when they became able to make uſe of it, have not tried it in their turn? And whether we conſider the majority, by whoſe hands this weapon is to be wielded, or the minority, upon whom the weight of it muſt fall, it will plainly appear to be admirably ſuited to the preſent times. As to the beaſts of burden, who fall to be driven by this method

method, they are known to be ſuch dull and lifeleſs animals (as they are moſt of them paſt the vigour of youth) that no other argument can make any impreſſion upon them. However a horſe might be managed, who is a generous creature, no-body could think of another method to make an aſs move, but conſtantly to belabour its ſides. There cannot be a clearer evidence of the dulneſs and ſtupidity of theſe obſtinate beings we have to do with, than the expence of rhetoric that has been thrown away upon them, to perſuade them of a thing as clear as the ſun, *viz.* that if they had any conſcience they would depoſe themſelves, and yield their place to more pliable ſucceſſors: they even pretend conſcience here again, and tell us, they are placed in a ſtation which they dare not deſert, unleſs they be thruſt out of it. Now, let the reader judge how uncapable of perſuaſion one muſt be, to find difficulty in ſo plain a caſe, and therefore how neceſſary it is, that a more effectual method ſhould be tried.

On the other hand, the majority in Aſſemblies and Commiſſions ſeems, at preſent, to be peculiarly adapted to ſuch a method of conviction as I have mentioned. One part of our ſtrength lies in the laity who attend our judicatories; theſe, as they poſſeſs no benefice in the church, they are out of the reach of this ſort of cenſure, and therefore are only capable of inflicting, but not of ſuffering it; and, as they are not much accuſtomed to ſolving caſes of conſcience, what other method can occur to them, when things of this nature are thrown in their way, than the more gentleman-like method, for which Alexander the Great is ſo juſtly celebrated, *viz.* cutting the troubleſome knot, which they would find tedious and difficult to unty? The reſt of our ſide conſiſts in clergy of the younger ſort, who, as they are imitators of the manners of gentlemen, may be ſuppoſed to act with the ſame ſpirit in public judgment. Though they can give flouriſhes of rhetoric enough; nay, though of one of them in particular, I may literally ſay,

——————— *He cannot ope*
*His mouth, but out there flies a trope:*

Yet as for logic, it is well known this part of education

is

is fallen into great contempt, and it is not to be expected, that ſuch briſk and lively ſpirits, who always hated every thing that looked ſcholaſtic-like, can bear to be tied down to the ſtrict methods of argumentation; but though we were greater maſters in this method of conviction, yet our blood may eaſily be ſuppoſed too warm for any thing that is ſo ſlow, and at beſt ſo uncertain in its ſucceſs. No; we are now the majority, and our power, as a late acquiſition, is the more agreeable for being new, we muſt taſte the ſweets of authority, which can only be by compelling our inferiours to obey us. If our ſentences are executed, it is the ſame thing to the new incumbent, the ſame thing to the church in general, and the ſame thing to us, whether the executors are willing or unwilling: for, as to that whole matter of conſcience, about which ſo much noiſe is made, I have already related our ſentiments; from whence it is evident, that ſuch nonſenſe, as laying a violent temptation in mens way, to act againſt the light of their own mind, is nothing but words without a meaning: and as to the expreſſion of the apoſtle Paul, about church power, which he uſes over and over again, that it is *for edification, and not for deſtruction*, it is no ſecret, that there is a various reading; and if once we had *for deſtruction, and not for edification* eſtabliſhed as the true reading, which, if we were dealers in criticiſm, might perhaps be eaſily done, we ſhould not only get rid of this troubleſome text, but make an acquiſition of it on our ſide of the queſtion, to the confuſion of our greateſt enemies.

## MAXIM XI.

*The character which moderate men give their adverſaries, of the orthodox party, muſt always be that of* knaves *or* fools; *and, as occaſion ſerves, the ſame perſon (if it will paſs) may be repreſented as a* knave *at one time, and as a* fool *at another.*

The juſtice of this proceeding may be eaſily made appear. The principles of moderation being ſo very evident to reaſon, it is a demonſtration, that none, but unreaſonable men, can reſiſt their influence. And therefore

fore we cannot ſuppoſe, that ſuch as are againſt us can be ſo from conſcience. Beſides, ſetting aſide the ſuperior intrinſic excellence of the one ſet of principles above the other, there are much ſtronger carnal motives, to ſpeak in their own ſtile, to act in their way, than in ours; and therefore, there is great ground to conclude, that they act from hypocriſy, but not ſo of us. They pleaſe the people; we pleaſe, at leaſt endeavour to pleaſe, thoſe of high rank. Now, there are many remarkable advantages they gain by pleaſing the people, whereas it is evident, *ex poſt facto*, that we gain nothing by pleaſing the gentry; for they never trampled upon us ſo much as of late; and have entirely defeated our application to parliament for augmentation of ſtipend: ſo far are we from being in any reſpect the better of the gentry, that we have really great reaſon to complain of them; for, when we have endeavoured to ingratiate ourſelves with them, by ſoftneſs and complaiſance, and by going conſiderable lengths with them in their freedom, they, often-times, moſt ungenerouſly deſpiſe us but the more; nay, many of them have firſt taught us to live at a high rate, and then refuſe to give us any thing to keep it up. Now, as we men of reaſon could not but foreſee this, it is plain, nothing but the moſt diſintereſted virtue could lead us to act as we have done. Whereas, on the other hand, the orthodox have gained, and do poſſeſs the eſteem of the common people; and ſo it is plain, they could have no other view in their conduct but to attain it. However, to ſhew our charity, we allow there are ſome on their ſide, who are indifferently honeſt, but theſe are men of very weak intellectuals, as is evident from their not thinking as we do.

The other part of the maxim is abundantly reaſonable, but not ſo eaſily put in practice, *viz.* repreſenting the ſame individual perſon ſometimes as a *knave*, and ſometimes as a *fool*. This affair is ſometimes unluckily managed, when it is uncautiouſly attempted. In order to its being done ſucceſsfully, therefore, let the two following rules be obſerved.

1. Let a man be repreſented as a knave and a hypocrite to one ſort of people in the world; and let him be

repreſented as a fool, not to the ſame, but to another ſort: let the firſt be chiefly your better ſort of people, particularly thoſe among them that hate much profeſſion of religion, and are apt to call all ſtrictneſs hypocriſy: the other, it is plain, muſt be the ſimple and credulous.

The 2*d* rule is, that, if poſſible, there ſhould be different perſons employed in ſpreading theſe different calumnies of the ſame man; by this apparent conſiſtency in every one's opinion with itſelf, they will be the more eaſily maintained, and be the leſs liable to diſcovery: and thus as the ſeveral wheels of a watch, by oppoſite motions, promote the ſame end, ſo the ſeveral members of the moderate body, by ſeemingly different and oppoſite means, conſpire in promoting the good of the whole. The principle upon which theſe two rules are founded, is, that probability ought to be ſtudied in every falſhood we would have believed; which principle is laid down, and finely illuſtrated in the *Art of Political Lying*, ſaid to be wrote by one Dr. Arbuthnot.

It will not, I hope, be reckoned wandering from my ſubject, when I obſerve, that the very ſame principle of ſtudying probability is to be applied to the celebration of the characters of our friends, as well as the defamation of our enemies. Theſe two deſigns, indeed, have a very ſtrong connexion, and do mutually ſupport and promote one another. Praiſing one character is, by neceſſary and manifeſt conſequence, a defamation of its oppoſite: and, in ſome caſes, which may eaſily be conceived, it is the moſt eligible, and the moſt effectual way of doing it. I have been preſent at a converſation, where the chief intention of one of the ſpeakers, and what he had moſt at heart, was to ruin the character and reputation of a certain perſon, who happened to be mentioned, with his hearers; but as he could not well know, whether they were able to bear a large quantity of unmixed reproach, he choſe the wiſer and ſafer method, of celebrating another character, and drawing it with all his art, in ſuch a manner as the ſtrongeſt oppoſition poſſible might appear, in ſome of its circumſtances, to that of the perſon intended to be wounded by reflection.

But in this, as in the former caſe, great judgment and prudence muſt be uſed; nothing muſt be ſaid, the contrary to which is, or may be eaſily known to be true, and particularly all the antiquated orthodox phraſes, in giving a miniſter's character, are to be religiouſly avoided. The neceſſity of this direction will beſt appear from an example: Suppoſe I ſhould ſay of Momus, he was a youth of early, and continues to be a man of eminent piety, walking with God, and ſpending many hours every day in ſecret devotion, has a deep and a ſtrong ſenſe, upon his mind, of the worth and value of time, and lays it out wholly in fitting others, and himſelf, for eternity; has ſo ſacred a regard for truth, that he never tells a lye, even in jeſt; has a moſt humble deportment, and is perfectly free from that prevailing fault, of triumphing over the weak or ſhame-faced by raillery or impudence; has been frequently heard to expreſs his diſpleaure at all levity of carriage, and frothy, unprofitable diſcourſe in perſons of the ſacred character; and as he was always himſelf remarkable for a purity of converſation, ſo he cannot allow the moſt diſtant alluſion to obſcenity to paſs without a reproof: in ſhort, his whole behaviour commands both the reverence and love of all who have the happineſs of his acquaintance.—I ſay, if I ſhould draw the character of Momus in this manner, as ſome authors do thoſe of the Puritan clergy, about a hundred years ago, it is probable he would give me no thanks, and indeed he would owe me none; for it would have much more the air of a ſatire than of a panegyric.

It is, however, poſſible to draw a character of the ſame perſon which ſhall have ſome truth, and much probability in it; and which, as being the character of a modern, ſhall be much more in the modern commendatory ſtile.—He is a man of a moſt ſprightly and lively fancy, of an inexhauſtible fund of wit and humour, where he pleaſes to diſplay it, tho' the iniquity of the times has, in ſome meaſure, checked its indulgence. He is notwithſtanding the grimneſs of his countenance entirely free from any ſourneſs or moroſeneſs of temper, ſo that, in his converſation, a man may enjoy all man-

ner of eaſe and freedom. He is a moſt genteel and elegant preacher and poet; and, to my knowledge, a man of a warm and good heart †.

## MAXIM XII.

*As to the world in general, a moderate man is to have great charity for Atheiſts and Deiſts in principle, and for perſons that are looſe and vitious in their practice, but not at all for thoſe that have a high profeſſion of religion, and a great pretence to ſtrictneſs in their walk and converſation.*

This maxim ſeems to be pretty ſtrongly laid, and yet, upon a ſtrict enquiry, it will be found that we follow it very exactly. That we have charity for the firſt mentioned ſort of perſons is evident; for we endeavour to accommodate ourſelves to them, and draw as near them as poſſibly we can, inſiſting upon nothing in our ſermons but what may be ſaid to be a part, or an improvement of the law of nature. And as to our having no charity for the other ſort, it is as evident; witneſs the odious idea we have affixed to the name of a profeſſor (unleſs when it is meant of a profeſſor in a college); and witneſs our ironical way of ſpeaking, when we ſay of a man, he has a *grave ſanctified air*: nay, even holineſs and godlineſs are ſeldom taken by us in a very good ſenſe, when we ſay, *one of the holy brethren*, or a *good godly lady*, they would miſtake us very much that would think we had a high opinion of any of theſe perſons.

This our conduct a certain young man, of the orthodox ſide, reflected very ſeverely upon, as he thought, in a ſermon, which he afterwards printed, in words to this purpoſe: "They can indeed talk very fluently of "univerſal benevolence, and a charitable candid diſ-"poſition,—but their charity is confined to theſe who "favour their opinions, or perhaps are indifferent about "religion

† This expreſſion, *a man of a good heart*, is much in faſhion among the moderate, and of great ſignificancy and beauty, but it is only to be uſed in ſpeaking to perſons of ſome degree of taſte; for I knew a particular inſtance in which it diſobliged the perſon it was intended to gain.

" religion altogether, while the leaſt appearance of ſe-
" rious devotion, or fervent zeal for God, is enough to
" forfeit it. Indeed this charity is as myſterious as the
" faith of the moſt bigotted catholic; it is equally full
" of contradictions, and ſeems reſolved to found itſelf,
" not upon evidence, but upon the want of it. Where
" every thing has the worſt appearance, there they will
" believe well; but where the outward conduct is
" blameleſs, they candidly ſuſpect that nothing but hy-
" pocriſy lies at the bottom." But, with the leave of this ſmart youth, what he ſays of us is very true, and we maintain it to be right; for, the very meaning of charity is to believe without evidence; it is no charity at all to believe good of a man when we ſee it, but when we do not ſee it. It is with charity in ſentiment, as with charity in ſupplying the wants of the neceſſitous; we do not give alms to the rich but to the poor. In like manner, when there are all outward appearances of goodneſs, it requires no charity to believe well of the perſons: but when there are none at all, or perhaps very many to the contrary, then I will maintain it is charity, and charity in its perfection, to believe well of them. Some object to this; Well, ſince it is your will, have charity for them, but have charity alſo for ſuch as are apparently good. Oh! the ſtupid world! and ſlow of heart to conceive! is it not evident to a demonſtration, that if the appearance of wickedneſs be the foundation of charity, the appearance of goodneſs, which is its oppoſite, muſt be the foundation of a quite contrary judgment, *viz.* ſuſpecting or rather believing ill of them. If any ſtill inſiſt, that if not charity, yet juſtice ſhould incline us to believe well of them, as I have ſeemingly confeſſed: I anſwer, that we have no occaſion for juſtice, if we have charity; for charity is more than juſtice, even as the whole is more than a part; but though I have ſuppoſed, *argumentandi gratia*, that juſtice requires this, yet it is not my ſentiment; for the perſons meant being uſually great enemies to us, are thereby cut off from any claim in juſtice to our good opinion; and being alſo, as has been proved, improper objects of charity, it

remains that we ſhould hate them with perfect hatred, as in fact we do.

## MAXIM XIII.

*All moderate men are joined together in the ſtricteſt bond of union, and do never fail to ſupport and defend one another to the utmoſt*, be the cauſe they are engaged in what it will.

This maxim I do not inſert ſo much for the inſtruction of the ignorant, as for the perfection of my own plan, and the honour of the whole body; for I have hardly ever known it fail in any inſtance whatever. And as this character belongs, without controverſy, to all the moderate, ſo it belongs to them by an excluſive privilege; for they do moſt loudly complain of, and load, with moſt opprobrious epithets, any of the orthodox who attempt to imitate them in it, as has been ſometimes known. And, indeed, nothing can be more juſt and reaſonable than theſe complaints; for ſuch conduct in the orthodox is a plain deſertion of their own principles, a robbery and invaſion of the property of others: Conſcience, upon which they pretend to act, is, of all things, the moſt ſtiff and inflexible; and cannot, by any art, be moulded into another ſhape than that which it naturally bears; whereas, the whole principles of moderation are moſt gentle and ductile, and may be applied to almoſt all purpoſes imaginable.

If any, through an envious infidelity, entertain a doubt of the truth aſſerted in the maxim, they are referred, for ſatisfaction, to the Hiſtory of the Proceedings of this church for theſe 20 years by paſt, which I take to have been the true reforming period; and are hereby defied to produce an inſtance in which any moderate man, wiſe or unwiſe, old or young, grave or ſprightly, failed to concur in ſupporting one of his own ſide, whatever was his cauſe, active, or paſſive, a project for advancement, or the danger of a proſecution. Let but one of us ſtart a ſcheme, in which he may find his account, or become candidate for an office, the whole, upon the firſt impulſe, as the concordant ſtrings

of

of a muſical inſtrument anſwer to the touch, return and reverberate the ſound. If Momus unwarily makes a ſally into the territories of *good humoured vice*, and is unhappily betrayed by thoſe who ought not to have been truſted, how powerfully is he upheld by the graveſt of the party, and the uncharitable malevolent enemy ſtung and deſtroyed, like the bear in the fable, for diſturbing the hive of induſtrious bees? Nay, as a yet ſtronger inſtance (being more againſt nature) I could ſhew, in the records of a certain preſbytery, declarations ſigned by the moſt moderate hands, and yet containing as high and ranting expreſſions in favour of the rights of the Chriſtian people, as ever were uſed by the moſt orthodox writer; becauſe, by a wonderful concurrence of circumſtances, they ſerved, at that time, to promote the ſettlement of a moderate man.

Every eye muſt immediately perceive the beauty and excellence of this part of our character. What more amiable than union? or, what more neceſſary to the ſupport of any ſociety? and, what more hateful and horrid than diſcord and diviſion? Is it not alſo, by this very means, that we have obtained the victory, and do ſtill preſerve our ſuperiority over the orthodox party? They are wholly ignorant of the laws of ſociety, as they have been lately well explained by ſome of our brethren in print; and know not that all who enter into it, give up their rights as individuals, and are bound *to follow what they diſapprove*; to ſee with the eyes, and act for the intereſt of the whole body.

It muſt be no ſmall commendation of ſuch conduct, that in ſo doing we either follow, or are followed, by the moſt eminent and illuſtrious characters in this nation. It is probable there may be ſeveral controverted elections tried before the parliament in a ſhort time; and I dare ſay, any wiſe man will foretel their iſſue in each caſe, much more certainly from the character of the perſon, than from the merits of the cauſe. And it is, with ſome pleaſure, I obſerve, that whoever begun this practice firſt, we have carried it to the greateſt perfection; for, amongſt us, the characters of men have been openly pled in defence of their cauſe, which,

if

if I am not miſtaken, hath hardly ever been done in any civil court.

How admirably does this principle fall in with the ſcheme of philoſophy, upon which the preſent generation is formed: it illuſtrates the truth of Mr. H——n's doctrine, that virtue is founded upon inſtinct and affection, and not upon reaſon; that benevolence is its ſource, ſupport, and perfection; and that all the particular rules of conduct are to be ſuſpended, when they ſeem to interfere with the general good. In ſhort, it ſhews, that the moderate are a tranſcript, in miniature, and do moſt diſtinctly exhibit the order, proportion, and unity of deſign of the univerſal ſyſtem.

Time would fail me, if I ſhould go through all the excellencies of this growning maxim, and therefore I ſhall only further obſerve, that it excells all the known principles of action for clearneſs and perſpicuity. In order to determine which ſide to chooſe in a diſputed queſtion, it requires no long diſcuſſions of reaſon, no critical inquiry into the truth of controverted facts, but only ſome knowlege of the characters of men, a ſtudy much more agreeable, as well as more common, than that of books. To ſpeak more properly, it requires no ſtudy at all of any kind; for, as to the groſs, or general tendency of a character, common fame communicates the impreſſion, and ſeldom or never deceives us. This is probably the reaſon that the maxim, as has been obſerved at the beginning of the illuſtration, is conſtantly and unerringly followed by the moderate of every age and condition: on which account, I give it as my opinion, that it be added to the number of the *feelings*, which are, at preſent, ſo much upon the growing hand.

Thus I have laid down and illuſtrated, theſe excellent maxims, not without labour and expence of thought; and, I think, carried them ſo far as to make a complete ſyſtem for the education and accompliſhment of a moderate clergyman, for his guidance in public judgment, and his direction as to private practice. And now, courteous reader, as a traveller, after having gone through the different parts of a country, aſcends ſome eminence

eminence to review the whole, let us ſtand ſtill and rejoice over the happy ſtate of our mother-church of Scotland, in which moderation ſo greatly prevails; and let us rejoice in hope of what improvements ſhe may yet arrive at, by adhering to theſe maxims, now digeſted into ſuch admirable form and order. O what noble, ſublime, and impenetrable ſermons ſhall now be preached! what victories and triumphs ſhall be obtained, over the ſtupid populace, by forced ſettlements, which never have ſuch a beautiful and orderly form, as when finiſhed by ſoldiers, marching in comely array, with ſhining arms, a perfect image of the church militant! and what perfectly virtuous and ſinleſs lives ſhall be led by theſe clergy, who, with ſteady eye, regard the good of this vaſt *whole*, which never yet went wrong! There is nothing indeed that any way tarniſhes the beauty of this proſpect, but the miſcarriage of the augmentation ſcheme, over which I could now lament, in elegiac ſtrains, but that my hope is not yet quite extinct; for, who can tell whether, when we ſhall have brought moderation to perfection, when we ſhall have driven away the whole common people to the Seceders, who alone are fit for them, and captivated the hearts of the gentry to a love of our ſolitary temples, they may not be pleaſed to allow us more ſtipends, becauſe we ſhall have nothing to do but to ſpend them?

I would now propoſe, that the next enſuing General Aſſembly would appoint (what indeed I might not without reaſon expect, whether they appoint it or not) that all the profeſſors of divinity in the nation ſhall lecture one day, every week, upon this ſyſtem of moderation, that our youth may be trained up, from their infancy in a taſte for it. This, I am ſure, will be much more profitable than any of the antiquated ſyſtems of divinity, as Pictet or Turretine: nay, I am perſuaded, it is more exactly calculated for the preſent times, than even the moſt modern authors, Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus, which laſt, in Mr. Foulis's tranſlation, hath, by many young divines, in their firſt year, been miſtaken for *Markii Medulla Theologiae*.

If this my treatiſe ſhould meet with the ſucceſs and acce pt-

acceptance that it juſtly deſerves, it is my intention to offer to the public, a ſtill more minute and particular delineation of the moderate character, either in another book, of a different form from this, or, perhaps, in a ſecond edition of the ſame, which ſhall in that caſe be the text, and to which I ſhall add large explanatory notes, containing much private hiſtory, and referring to many particular facts, in order to render it the more grateful, as well as the more inſtructing to the reader. I have alſo by me the *ſtamina vitae* of many uſeful and edifying treatiſes, which ſhall be produced in due time, as the muſes ſhall give aſſiſtance: ſuch as the art of making a flouriſhed ſermon with very little matter, by a proper mixture of ſimilies, and by repeating every paragraph over again in the form of a ſoliloquy: One reſolution of all caſes of conſcience, from the good of the whole ſcheme; A directory for prayer, upon the ſame ſcheme; The horrid ſin and danger of miniſters ſpending too much time in catechiſing and viſiting, in country pariſhes: I do not make any mention of towns, to avoid giving of offence; as alſo, leſt it ſhould prove true what I have heard, that the practice is ſcarcely known in any of our great towns, in which caſe, my reaſonings would look like beating the air. Theſe, with many others, I am, with aſſiduous care, purchaſing materials for compleating, by obſervation, and converſation, that our church may go on, in a progreſſive motion, toward the zenith of perfection, and meridian of glory.

I ſhall now ſhut up this work, by acquainting the reader with a ſecret, which, perhaps, he would otherwiſe not advert to, *viz.* that I enjoy the pleaſure of having done a thing ſeemingly quite impracticable. I have given the moderate, and thoſe who deſire to be inſtructed in that ſcience, a complete view of the maxims and principles of moderation, without, at the ſame time, proſtituting or giving them up to the poſſeſſion of every common reader. Perhaps ſome will aſk, how I imagine I have effected this? I anſwer, that I have ſo framed the whole of my book, that it is really intelligible only to perſons duly qualified; and to every ſuch perſon, it is tranſparent as the ſpring water. I have

given

given only moderate reaſons for moderate principles, ſo that however ſtrongly they may convince ſome, *viz.* thoſe of our kidney, others they will be ſo far from convincing, that they will be thought to operate a quite contrary way. I have managed this ſo carefully, that I could venture to lay a wager, of all that I am worth, that this treatiſe ſhall be taken, by very many, to be the work of an orthodox pen, and to be intended as a banter upon moderate men, and their way. They will be tempted to laugh at us, whom they will imagine to be expoſed by this revelation of our myſteries: but, how ingeniouſly are they deceived; for, by that very means, every properly prejudiced mind is furniſhed with a complete ſyſtem, upon which to form his ſentiments, and regulate his conduct.

*F I N I S.*

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